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A CHILD'S QUESTION.

BY SALLIE E. COOPER.

From the orchard to the garden
As I passed one spring time day,
With her bonnet on her shoulders
Came a little girl that way.

Tired she looked and half bewildered,
Timid, doubting came she near;
Scarce I saw her ere she questioned—
"Does—Rachel's—mother—live—here."

Ere I made reply I smiled
At the artless little elf,
"Who is Rachel, little stranger?
Who her mother? who yourself?"

But I guessed whom she was seeking.
So I sent her on her way—
Not a moment would she stay:
But I learned from "Rachel's mother"
Who she was another day.

THE CUBAN PATRIOT;

OR,

THE PILOT AND THE SPY.

A STORY

Founded upon the romantic realities of the present bitter struggle in "The Gem of the Antilles."

BY COLONEL PRENTISS INGRAHAM,

AUTHOR OF "THE SPY OF THE YACHT," "THE MASKED SPY," "OUT OF THE GUTTER," "THE SURF ANGEL," "TRACKED THROUGH LIFE," &c., &c., &c.

CHAPTER I.

THE PILOT.

"'Tis home-felt pleasure prompts the patriot's sigh—
This makes him wish to live, and dare to die.
—*Campbell.*

Like the clouds and sunshine of life, looked fair Nature, one lovely afternoon some four years agone, on the southern coast of Cuba; for, though the land was pervaded by a Sabbath stillness, and the hill-tops were bathed in sunlight, and the surf broke in rainbow hues upon the pebbly strand, afar off, upon the ocean, a dark frown rested, the precursor of a gathering tempest.

Gliding swiftly over the glassy waters nearer shore, and yet undisturbed by the approaching storm, were two vessels, heading directly for the land, and making every endeavor to add to their speed, for, at a glance, it was evident it was "a stern chase," as ever and anon a white puff of smoke would burst from the bows of the pursuer, and a shrieking shot would rush on after the pursued, until it buried itself in a blue wave, or flew far beyond its destined mark and was seen no more.

On flew the two vessels, the one in advance pointing her sharp prow directly for the island-studded coast, as if to seek a refuge there, while the one astern followed like a hound on the track.

Upon a foliage-clad hillside, the white walls of a handsome plantation villa glimmered through the leafy arches, and looked out over the blue expanse of ocean, while cultivated fields, sloping lawns, and ornamental grounds surrounded upon all sides the fairy scene, denoting it as the homestead of some family of wealth and refinement.

Standing in a group upon the broad veranda of the mansion, and glancing seaward, were three persons, an elderly, well-preserved matron, a young girl of sixteen, and a youth of twenty, and the close resemblance between the three proved that they were bound together by the strongest kindred ties.

With interest they were watching the rapid flight of the two vessels, and now and then casting a look upon the dark storm-clouds that were spreading their inky stains over the transparent blue of heaven's dome.

"See, mother, I am right—it *is* one of those little vessels purchased by the Patriots, to run arms into the island, and her pursuer is the Spanish vessel of war Tampa," and the youth turned quickly around to once more rivet his gaze upon the approaching vessels, the nearest one of which was within two miles of the land.

"You are right, I believe, Leon, and before our very eyes we must see the brave little craft meet her doom," answered the mother in a tone of great feeling.

"See, Brother Leon, she is making for the Island harbor and will be captured or destroyed," exclaimed the young girl, with excitement glowing in her face.

"Never! Faustine—I will save her."

"You, my son?"

"You, brother?"

"Yes—no man in Cuba knows this coast better than I do, and should the little steamer put into the Island harbor, I can run her out and laugh at the Spaniards, and I will do it," and the youth darted into the house, and in ten minutes returned rigged in a light suit of water-proof clothing.

"Mother, I have sent Dido down to the boat-house, and he will row me on board; ha! yonder rises an enemy to both vessels, should they seek shelter on this coast," and the youth pointed toward the threatening storm, still miles and miles away, yet rushing down in fury.

"But, Leon! my son, what are you going to do?" cried the mother, anxiously.

"To save you vessel, mother, from both capture, and destruction on the rocks—Farewell, mother, farewell, Faustine," and hurriedly embracing the matron and the maiden, whose entreaties were unable to detain him, Leon Delmont ran rapidly down the pathway, leading to a cove sheltered by the headland, and where the boats belonging to the mansion, were anchored in a quiet harbor.

In a few moments the young man had reached the boat-house, and discovered Dido, an intelligent-looking negro, formed like a Hercules, awaiting him in a small cat-rigged sailboat, built for both safety and speed.

LEON DELMONT BOARDS THE SPANISH FRIGATE IN THE STORM.

"All right, Dido; now take the oars and give way, until we feel the land breeze," and with a bound the youth sprang into the stern of the little boat, which, urged forward by the strong arms of the negro, began to dance lively over the waters.

"Ship your oars now, Dido, for she feels the wind, and yonder comes the little steamer, directly for the Island harbor—"

"She better keep out, or the fishes will eat her crew," remarked Dido, with an ominous shake of his head, and then, without taking his eyes off the little steamer, he continued,

"She sees us now, for yonder go her flag."

"You are right, Dido; run our flag up to the peak—no, hold! the Spanish flag would alarm them; here, run this one up," and the young man drew from his side pocket a small, but handsome silk flag, that of the Cuban Patriots.

"Dat's de one, Marse Leon! ah, wouldn't Missy Faustine be glad to see it," exclaimed Dido, with enthusiasm, as he ran the little flag up to the peak.

"She does see it,—for yonder stand my mother and Faustine, looking after us from the shore," exclaimed Leon, with a quick glance astern.

"Yes; and de steamer see it too," returned Dido; and as he spoke a large Cuban flag was hoisted on board of the leading vessel, which now was but half a mile distant from the little sailboat.

Nearer and nearer came the flying vessel, rushing on at her utmost speed, while, still two miles astern of her, loomed up the frowning hull of the man-of-war, using every artifice to overtake her swift leader.

A few moments more and there came a loud hail, in Spanish, from the decks of the steamer, and a voice called out:

"Are you a pilot?"

"I can act as such: is that a Cuban patriot vessel?" answered Leon.

"It is the Foxhound, with supplies and volunteers for the Cubans," returned a manly voice from the deck.

"Then I will save you, for you are in great danger. Slacken speed, and throw me a line;" and in a minute more Leon was on board the steamer, while his little sailboat was taken in tow, Dido having lowered the sail and unshipped her mast.

One rapid glance Leon cast upon the eager faces surrounding him, and then his eyes rested upon the frank, manly countenance of her commander, a young man who had formerly served with honor to himself in the navy of the United States.

"You are the captain of this steamer, sir?"

"I am Frank Harold, the commander of the Foxhound," answered the officer, gazing into the sun-bronzed, handsome face of the stranger before him, and reading there the true courage and nobleness of the young man.

"Then permit me to say you have run into a trap; there is no safe harbor along this coast, and without a pilot to get you out, yonder Spaniard could come in and destroy you, to find himself wrecked half an hour afterward by that coming storm.

"You speak plainly, young sir, and in earnest; but I was ordered to run to this point."

"That may be; but those who gave you your orders were not seamen, and asked no advice. You have but one chance of escape."

"And that is—"

"To let me take the helm and run you through the Devil's Mouth, as a narrow opening in the rocks is called."

"You look honest, sir, but—"

"But you fear to trust me; why not say so?"

"In truth, we know not whom to trust, and—"

"True; but you have no time for words, for yonder comes the Tampa, and behind her is the storm. You are armed—stand by my side with your drawn pistol, and should I fail you, put a bullet through my heart."

The eye of Leon Delmont never quailed as he spoke, and, after a moment's hesitation, Captain Frank Harold said:

"Take the helm, sir, and if I carry out your own suggestion, you will pardon me: but how, may I ask, did you know you steamer to be the Tampa?"

"Once I was an officer on her quarter-deck."

"And left her—"

"Because I would not fight against my native land, which I am now trying to serve by saving this vessel:" and without another word, Leon walked to the helm—and as he put the craft away, in the direction of the little cove from which he had sailed, he glanced admiringly over the neat decks and perfect rigging, and noticed that she was one of those small, rakish little brig-rigged steamers, used during the American civil war as blockade runners into Southern ports.

By Leon's side stood Captain Harold, trumpet in hand, while the other two officers and twenty men, who made up the crew, were at their posts, eagerly watching the strange pilot, and now and then casting their eyes landward, in admiration of the beautiful shores, dotted here and there with plantation homes, and then turning them astern upon their pursuer, still coming on with every hope of making them captive.

Forward, were grouped some forty volunteers, composed of Cubans, Irish and Americans—while aft, upon the quarter-deck, stood two officers, who were going in command of the expedition, to join President Cespedes.

Leon Delmont rapidly took in the entire scene, and then he turned and devoted himself to his duties.

"You have not given me your name, sir?" said Captain Harold, interrogatively.

"Call me Pilot, if you please, for—'what's in a name?'" answered the young man, smiling.

"Well, Pilot, I can see no opening here—you are running into a small cove—beware!"

"That cove would be a safe anchorage in a storm, were it deeper; but it only has about seven feet of water in it: ha! yonder flies a signal for me:" and Leon waved his handkerchief toward the head land, upon which stood his mother and sister, with the house-servants grouped around them, waving him God speed.

"Yet I see no opening!" again said Captain Harold, anxiously, as nothing but a wall of rocky islands loomed up ahead.

"Be patient, captain—yonder stand my mother and sister—would I cause ruin and death before their eyes, even to an enemy?"

"Spaniards have brought ruin and death upon women, sir. *Spaniards have no mercy,*" answered the captain, quickly.

"I am no Spaniard: look! do you observe as we round this island we are losing sight of the Tampa? Well, I trust you will never again meet with her, until you command a vessel her equal in size and strength."

"I hope so, sincerely; but are we not running too rapidly for the rocky dangers surrounding us?"

"No, sir; now do not speak to me, for my eyes and hands have all they can do," answered the young pilot, and as he spoke the steamer swept swiftly around an island, and rushed into a very cauldron of waters, which caused her to dance like a feather on the foam.

With anxiety at their hearts all stood and looked upon the wild scene around them, and then rested their gaze upon the cool and daring helmsman, who, with no quiver of the face, no tremor of the muscular arms, firmly held the little vessel upon her way, through the seething waters, around the jutting headland, over a smoother sheet of water, and then again into a torrent of foaming waves.

A reeling of the vessel, a staggering, a lurch, and the gallant steamer was through the Devil's Mouth, out into the open sea, and safe from her pursuer, unless she carried a pilot who could run her through the same perilous channel.

Ere Captain Harold could say one word to the strange pilot, there came from the land a faint cheer, and looking astern, all saw the group on the headland still watching their progress, and cheering and waving in delight at their escape.

"You have saved us, sir, how can I ever repay you—name the sum—"

"I serve for love of country, not for money, Captain Harold; but this cargo is destined for the patriots, so if you will now stand away from the coast until you escape that storm, and, the third night from this, will return to the place where I joined you, I will run your vessel in, and then guide the expedition to Cespedes; should it be storming, await the first clear night, for 'tis death to be caught in that harbor in bad weather. Now I must leave you."

"Pardon me my suspicions, which now I know to have been unjust, and accept, in my name, the thanks of every true patriot of Cuba, for what you have done. I wish you could remain with us, but I will not detain you," and Captain Harold warmly grasped the hand of the young pilot.

The headway of the Foxhound was stopped, Dido reshipped the little mast, and set the sail, and followed by a loud cheer from all on board, Leon sprang into the small sailboat, took the helm, and pointed her sharp prow landward, while the steamer once again moved on her way, in a course directly from the island where she had so nearly met her doom.

CHAPTER II.

THE STORM.

The night came down in terror, through the air,
Mountains of clouds, with lurid summits robed;
The wind, in fitful sighs, swept o'er the sea,
And then a sudden lull, gentle as sleep,
Soft as an infant's dream hung, seemed to be
Lain like enchantment on the throbbing deep;
But false the calm! for now the air, affrighted gale
Burst in one loud explosion, far and wide,
Drowning the thunder's voice. —*Epes Sargent.*

The Spanish vessel of war Tampa, was one of the fastest sailers in the navy of Spain, and under a full head of steam and her canvas, it was hard for any craft to escape her; and therefore when the little Foxhound had nobly held her own during half a day's chase, it crushed the hopes of the Tampa's officers, regarding their ability to capture the fleet steamer.

But when they saw her head directly for the land, to seek a refuge amid the islands dotting the coast, their hopes again arose, for they believed it would be impossible for her to land her cargo and get away in the darkness of the night.

Upon the quarter-deck of the ship of war stood her officers in a group, excepting her commander and his first lieutenant, who were pacing to and fro near the wheel, engaged in conversation.

"I know the charts say this is a dangerous coast to be caught on in a storm, lieutenant; but yet it seems to me there must be some safe anchorage among those islands," said the commander to his officer.

"I agree with you, sir, and the more so on account of the movements of yonder steamer, for she evidently has a pilot of the coast aboard, and knows where she's heading. What is it, Señor Sanchez?" and the lieutenant turned to a midshipman who had approached.

"The Foxhound has slackened speed of late, sir, and we are now near enough to fire."

"Then blaze away with the bow-chasers, and keep it up until further orders."

"Si, señor;" and a moment after the flying shot were sent after the patriot vessel, but with such poor aim, as to do no harm.

The noise of the guns brought to the deck a maiden of sixteen, the daughter of the Tampa's commander, and as she crossed toward where her father stood, every motion was one of exquisite grace.

With the love of the military, prevalent in all women, the young girl had extended her admiration to wearing aboard ship a dark navy-blue dress, and jaunty sacque, handsomely embroidered in gold thread, and most becoming was it to her brillian Spanish style of beauty.

The dark eyes were hidden beneath black, sweeping lashes, the complexion was perfect, though dark like all daughters of her nation, while the mouth was faultless, and expressive of pride, passion and nobleness, and the tiny hands and feet were indicative of aristocratic birth; in one massive braid the glossy black hair was coiled around the haughty head, and but half hidden by a blue sailor-hat encircled by long streamers.

Such was Elinor Vanloo, the only child of the Tampa's commander; and as she joined her father upon the deck, every hat was raised, and every uniformed figure bent low in respect and admiration, for the maiden was dearly loved by both officers and men, for her presence brought sunshine upon the warlike decks.

"Well, Elinor, we are nearing the chase," said Captain Vanloo, as he offered his arm to his daughter.

"Yes, father, and yonder storm is nearing us: I have been watching its rapid approach from the cabin stern-ports," answered the young girl, in a musical voice.

"True, and I do not like its looks; yet, with the chase so nearly in our power, I do not care to stand to sea again;" and Captain Vanloo gazed long and earnestly at the coming storm, now rising rapidly into mid-heaven, and overspreading the sky and sea astern of them with the deepest gloom.

By this time the Foxhound had entered the first island reef, and was heading directly for the shelter of the lofty points of land further down the coast; and without slackening her speed, the Tampa was flying in her wake, determined to drive her ashore or capture her.

"Look! captain, yonder puts a boat out from the land," called Lieutenant Fanchon, as he descried the small sailboat, containing Leon Delmont and Dido, running down to head the Foxhound off.

"By Heaven, 'tis a pilot. Crowd on all she'll bear of steam, lieutenant, and we'll keep her in sight;" and instantly the Tampa's deck became a scene of animation.

In vain, however, proved the exertions of her officers to keep the Foxhound in view, for she was soon lost to their vision around an island point; and when half an hour afterward, the Tampa passed over the spot where the chase had last been seen, nowhere could she be discovered, for, like magic, she had disappeared, leaving no clue to the manner of her escape.

"Is her commander a witch; or has she run on a sunken rock and gone down?" asked Captain Vanloo in a puzzled tone.

"It is a strange circumstance, sir, and one I wish we could solve; but do you observe how rapidly that storm is rushing down upon us?"

"Yes, lieutenant, and unless we find an anchorage here, among these islands, I greatly fear for our own safety," and the Spanish commander turned with an anxious expression toward Elinor, who was lost in admiration of the terrible grandeur of the storm-swept heavens.

In vain did every eye seek for a haven of safety, as the vessel glided slowly around among the islands, and anxious expressions could be seen upon every face, for the sudden disappearance of the Foxhound, with no visible cause for that disappearance, had caused a dread to fall upon the seamen, bringing with it a presentiment of coming evil.

"Strip the ship to meet the storm, Señor Fanchon; double lash the guns, and place three men at the wheel—but hold! let signal guns of distress be fired, and doubtless some pilot from the shore will come to our aid," and the face of Captain Vanloo lightened, as the last thought crossed his mind.

Though darkness had not yet come over the earth the blackness of the storm-clouds caused the land to be but dimly visible, and in the dead calm that had fallen upon the sea, sure precursor of a terrible tempest, the boom of the gun sounded unearthly, as its harsh voice broke the stillness.

Again and again the brazen throat cried for help, signal lights were set, and at last rockets were sent whizzing into the inky blackness of the clouds, but yet no answer came, and the vessel was now put about to endeavor to reach the open sea once more; but rocky barriers were around them, no passage could anywhere be seen, and all on board felt a terrible foreboding that ere long they would be hurled madly into the midst of the sunken reefs, and find a watery grave.

"Hark! listen to that terrible roar, and yet how calm is all around us;" said Captain Vanloo suddenly; and strangely his voice sounded in the deathly silence.

"Father, is the danger great?" asked Elinor quietly, as enveloped in a waterproof, she once more came upon the deck.

"Yes, my child; but there is hope, although all looks so black around us—"

"Which way shall we head, sir?" broke in Lieutenant Fanchon suddenly.

"I declare I do not know. Keep her head pointed to meet the storm, and let every man be ready at his post. Have you lashed the guns?"

"All ready, sir, but the signal gun."

"Then after two more shots let it also be lashed. Did you ever see such blackness, and hear such a fearful roar?"

"It is coming on in fury, sir. See, we now feel the ocean's swell, and—ha! yonder, by that gun's flash, I thought I descried a sail, a small boat."

"Then burn a blue light," ordered Captain Vanloo, and over the midnight waters a dazzling light was thrown, revealing afar off the rushing front of the tempest, bearing a wall of foam before it high in air, and followed by shrieking winds, and crashing peals of thunder, while surrounding the ship upon all sides were sunken reefs, and rock-bound islands over which the waves were dashing with madness; but a wild yell of joy went up from the ship, as they discovered, not a hundred fathoms distant, a small boat bounding over the waters, and in it two persons pulling with every effort of strength at the oars.

"Ho, the Tampa!" cried a manly voice from the frail little craft, and through his trumpet Captain Vanloo called back, "Ahoy, the boat."

"Have lines in readiness to draw my boat aboard," cried the same voice.

"Aye, aye—come to leeward of us."

In another instant the occupants of the boat were upon the Tampa's quarter-deck, and throwing back the capes of their storm-hats, Leon Delmont and his servant Dido, stood before the Spanish officers.

"You! Leon Delmont?" exclaimed Captain Vanloo.

"Yes, sir; my home is yonder on the land—I saw your danger and have come to save you."

"You are a noble fellow, Delmont, and well I know if any one can save us now, you are the one to do it. Forget and forgive the past, and into your hands I yield the ship," answered the captain with feeling.

"I thank you for your compliment, Captain Vanloo. I will neither forget nor forgive the past, and yet I will do all in my power to save this ship," proudly answered the young man.

"*For my sake* you will not bear ill will now toward my father, Mr. Delmont—Leon," and the little hand of Elinor Vanloo rested upon the arm of the young pilot.

"For *your* sake, Elinor, I would do anything that lay in my power, and if this ship to-night escapes destruction, those on board of her may look upon *you* as their guardian angel; but below! quick! the storm is upon us—to your posts, men, and do your duty." And the last words of the pilot rang out above the terrible roar of the tempest.

With a few bounds, the young man sprang upon the bridge, amidships, and shouting to Dido to place himself at the wheel and aid the helmsmen, he took his stand where he could command a view of the ship from stem to stern, and at the same time glance ahead and around him upon the seething waters.

In spite of the quick order of Leon, and the entreaties of her father and his officers, Elinor refused to leave the deck, and lashed securely to the mizzen-mast, she calmly awaited the coming shock.

Like a drove of wild horses, rushing and careering madly over a rolling prairie, the storm came on, the wind moaning and sighing in agony, the waves roaring and lashing themselves into fury, and the wailing and shrieking of the tempest carrying terror to every heart, and threatening to hurl the devoted ship to instant destruction; and yet, cool and determined, the lightning's flash exhibited the young pilot standing at his post, his piercing eyes glancing over the waters, one hand holding to the bell-post, connecting with the engine-room, and the other grasping a silver speaking-trumpet.

"Down all! steady, helmsmen!" cried the voice of the pilot, sounding hoarse and strange through the trumpet, and at the same time he rang the bell for the engineer to let on all steam.

Down, down, down sunk the large steamer in the waters, as they receded before the storm, and then her bow reared upward, the foaming, bounding wall burst upon her, the seas poured on her decks, and the snapping of ropes and crashing of timbers proved that the wind was playing mad havoc in the rigging.

One mighty flood rushed from bow to stern of the vessel, tearing loose several cannon from their strong lashings, and bearing a dozen, struggling, shrieking wretches upon its raging bosom, away from all hope of human aid.

For a moment it was believed the ship was going down, and every heart stood still in agony, but then the commanding tones of the young pilot were heard above the howlings of the tempest.

"Lash those guns again, or all is lost."

A hundred men sprang to obey the order, led on by the brave lieutenant, and in a short while, in spite of the rolling and plunging

of the vessel, it was done, and steadily the huge ship moved on, piercing the darkness, which was almost tangible.

Now and then the stern, cool tones of the pilot cut the air, giving an order to the helmsmen, but otherwise no sound, other than the voice of the tempest, was heard, and all were startled to hear the clear, loud whistle of the steamer piercing the darkness and the storm.

Wildly, shrilly, the clear whistle cut the air, and in dread that the pilot was at fault, not a word was said, and the crew almost ceased to breathe; but then, suddenly, every heart bounded with joy, for off their starboard quarter, and far above them, gleamed forth a bright light, a beacon from the land, and instantly the whistle ceased, and at a greater speed the steamer bounded over the surging waters, now steering so as to place the land-beacon first on one quarter, then on the other, now astern, and again almost dead ahead.

"How, in Heaven's name, do you know this channel, Mr. Delmont?" and beside him stood Captain Vanloo, with Elinor clinging to his arm.

"I know the coast well, sir. Miss Vanloo, this is a dangerous place for you, in such a storm."

"I could not keep her in the cabin, and she would accompany me here," answered the captain, but his quick eye failed to catch the look that passed between his daughter and the pilot, during the vivid flash of lightning that came with his words.

On through the darkness plunged the noble vessel, each moment gaining headway against the storm, which had now spent its fury, while seaward the clouds were rapidly breaking away, and the sky becoming brighter.

An hour from the first shock of the storm, and all felt that the ship was saved, for she had gained an offing, was no longer surrounded by rocky islands, and all danger of shipwreck was over.

CHAPTER III.

THE PILOT'S REWARD.

If there be a crime,
Of deeper dye than all the guilty train
Of human vices, 'tis ingratitude.
—*Brooke's Earl of Warwick.*

"You have saved the Tampa, Mr. Delmont—and heartily do I thank you."

"Then let my thanks be in the knowledge of having served my fellow men, Captain Vanloo; and now, with your permission, I will bring the steamer to, and accompanied by my servant, return to the land."

"I cannot allow you to do so rash a deed—why your frail craft is—"

"A life-boat, and in it I have faced storms as severe as this; but now the sea is going down, and I can easily run in."

"Then it shall be as you wish; but first let me ask you a few questions. You reside on this coast, I believe?"

"I do, captain."

"You saw a small steamer seek refuge in your harbor this evening?"

"I did, sir," answered Leon, frankly.

"Then perhaps you can tell me how she escaped?"

"She ran through an opening in the islands, known as the Devil's Mouth."

"Ha! she had a pilot, I suppose, Mr. Delmont?"

"She had a pilot, Captain Vanloo."

The commander of the Tampa hesitated a moment, turned toward Lieutenant Fauchon and addressed a few words in a low tone, and then said to his daughter,

"Elinor, the danger is over now; so allow me to see you to the cabin."

"I prefer to remain, father."

Captain Vanloo bit his lip with vexation, but said, sharply,

"As you please." And turning once more to Leon, he continued, "Were you *that* pilot, Mr. Delmont?"

"I was."

"Do you know the style of the vessel you aided to escape, sir?"

"She was a Cuban Patriot ship, sir."

"*She was a pirate.*"

"In the eyes of your tyrannical government, Captain Vanloo; but in my opinion, she is less worthy the name of pirate, than are the ships in the navy of Spain."

"I know, Mr. Delmont, you sympathize with the Cubans—and now your own words have shown that you have aided them."

"I have just aided Spain, Captain Vanloo."

The captain flinched under this shot, but continued:

"Yes, and did you desire to re-enter the service, I can give you a commission as a reward for what you have done this night."

"And if I decline?"

"Then you are the enemy of Spain, and as such I must consider you."

"Father!" and Elinor turned with flashing eyes, and her voice rang with anger as she continued—"are you so base as to show such ingratitude?"

"My daughter, you address your father."

"I know it, and therefore I cannot believe him capable of such a crime as to now turn against the man who has this night saved his life, his ship, and the lives of his crew."

"You talk idly, Elinor, Lieutenant Fauchon send a marine guard here and place this man in irons—"

"I am sorry, Mr. Delmont, but you have confessed yourself a traitor to Spain, and as such you must stand by the alternative."

Leon Delmont uttered no word in reply, but calmly stood and allowed his arms to be ironed, and then was led away, to be confined in the lower deck, a prisoner to the man whom he had so nobly served.

Bitter were his thoughts as he sat there in the darkness, brooding over his unfortunate position, and, too miserable to sleep, he passed in wakefulness an hour or more; when suddenly he was startled by hearing near him a light step, and then a low voice said:

"Hold your hands and I'll unloose your manacles," and as Leon obeyed, he the next moment found himself free, and a hand then seized his own and led him down the deck, up the companion way, to the gun-deck, which was now deserted by all save the officers and men on duty.

Approaching the wheel, Leon's guide said to him:

"You will find your man there, sir;" and stepping forward, he was joined by the faithful negro.

"What means this, Dido?"

"She—Marse Leon, don't you seem surprised at nothing;" and ere he could say more, the officer of the deck coming forward, asked:

"Are you ready to depart now, sir?"

"Yes; at any time."

"Your boat is towing alongside, so if you will descend into her we will cast you off, but I fear you will have a hard time, sir," rejoined the officer, and quickly obeying Dido's hurried gesture, Leon slid down the rope into the lifeboat, and was the next instant followed by the faithful negro.

"All ready, sir," called Dido in a low tone, and the next moment the huge hull was dashing on, leaving the buoyant boat dancing on the waves astern.

"Quick, Marse Leon, let's raise our sail and move for home," exclaimed Dido, excitedly; and Leon, feeling from the negro's manner that danger yet threatened them, aided in shipping the light mast, reefing the small sail, and putting the boat away for the land.

Away she bounded under the pressure of the heavy wind, but holding up well under it, and sailing rapidly. Observing that the Tampa was still keeping on her course seaward, Leon said:

"Tell me, Dido, how did our escape come about?"

"Well, marse, you steer, while I keep a look-out on that Spaniard, for she promised me if we was discovered she would make us a signal."

"*She*, what mean you, Dido?"

"Why, you see, Marse Leon, it was the pretty missy did all the work, for when her pa and the lieutenant had gone to bed, the señorita came on deck, and says she to me, 'Dido, I am going to let your master get away,' and then she called out to the officer of the deck, and says she, 'Señor Martinez, the captain has retired, but bids me say to you to have the irons taken off the prisoner, and let him get into his boat with his servant and go, and señor, make no noise about it.'

"'Yes, señorita,' answered the officer, and he was tickled to get a chance to serve the young missy, and he told me, for you see they didn't make me a prisoner, as *of course* I was a good Spaniard—ha, ha, ha; but he told me to get two or three men, and put my boat over, and I wasn't long in doing it, and now you come up with a sailor, and the young missy hid down behind the big gun-carriage."

"What, was Elinor, I mean Miss Vanloo on deck when I left, and did she thus aid in my escape?" asked Leon, his voice trembling with emotion.

"I done told you just how 'twas, Marse Leon—and Lord save us, look yonder," and eagerly the negro pointed toward the steamer, which, dimly visible in the distance, was observed to be putting about, and as the two gazed upon her, they suddenly saw a bright red light turned in a circle three times.

"That's the signal—now we must get ahead," cried the negro, while his master, after coolly examining the distance between them and the steamer, and then glancing landward, said quietly—

"She is three miles off, Dido, and we have six miles yet to run to reach a place of safety. Shake out those reefs in the sail, and I believe we can yet escape."

With agility Dido obeyed the order, and under her increased canvas the little craft wildly flew over the waters; and though it was evident the steamer was overtaking them, yet there was hope that the fugitives might reach the shelter of the islands.

"Ha! yonder comes a shot—we are discovered. By heaven, I'll risk it!" exclaimed Leon, trimming in his sail, and changing his course so as to head for a spot where the sea leaped in mad fury, far out from land, as it dashed upon a rugged reef of rocks.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Ever My Queen.

BY PIERCE EGAN,

AUTHOR OF "THE FLOWER OF THE FLOCK," "VIOLET; OR, THE WONDER OF KINGSWOOD CHASE," "MARK JARRETT'S DAISY," ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.

ONLY A WORK GIRL.

Mr. Athol had been attracted by the bronzed face and piercing eyes of the gentleman on board Lord Londesberry's yacht, he had seen him start, and had followed the direction of his eyes to the face of Lydia, expecting, he knew not why, that she, too, would betray some signs of embarrassed recognition. In this he was not exactly disappointed; she did look excited, but not confused. Indeed, her aspect was one more of fear than discomposure. She appeared somewhat stupefied like one seized with sudden vertigo, and as Mr. Athol noted it, he felt a sudden pang at his heart, although quite unconscious of the warning that twinge conveyed.

With a tinge of scarlet on his forehead, and an abrupt sternness in his look and voice, which was remarkable because it was not natural to him, and there appeared to be not the slightest occasion for it, he said—

"Do you know that man on board the yacht, Miss Smith?"

She turned her eyes with a look of surprise on him, and replied, interrogatively—

"He who was bronzed by travel?"

"The same," he answered, loftily, for she appeared to be dazed.

"I do not," she returned, musingly.

"But you have met before?" he pursued.

"Never!" she replied, emphatically.

"It is clear that he recognized you," persisted Mr. Athol, growing yet grander, "and you—pardon me—you do not seem to have regarded him as a stranger—a perfect stranger—as one utterly unknown to you."

She elevated her eyes at his tone and manner, and answered emphatically—

"Indeed, I have never seen him before, never—never—but—" a strong shiver ran through her frame as she paused with an air of abstraction, and she looked fearingly over her shoulder in the direction in which the yacht was sailing. Then she pressed her hands over her eyes.

Mr. Athol felt something rise up in his throat, which he had to force down again, and once more, with an unnecessary display of hauteur and a slightly sarcastic laugh, he remarked—

"I am almost afraid you are not quite frank in this matter with me, Miss Smith."

She drew herself up to her full height in a moment, and in her way, grandly enough, she responded—

"I am not aware, Mr. Athol, of any obligation that renders it necessary for me to conceal from you, or to reveal to you, any feeling I may or may not have in the matter."

He lowered his brow, and in a more subdued and deprecatory tone, said—

"I ask your pardon for my presumption, but I thought—"

He stopped, for again she seemed to plunge once more into a fit of abstraction, and a strong shudder ran through her frame.

He was silent for a little while, but in a lower tone he resumed, it seemed to her reproachfully—

"Yet you aver you do not know this man?"

She looked up at him with a strange smile, as she made an impatient gesture with her shoulders.

"It is a weakness and a folly," she exclaimed, "a passing emotion—but it is gone, and no doubt forever."

"I do not understand you, Miss Smith," he remarked, with an inward disquietude, the meaning of which he understood further on.

"In the United States, during the time I was there, she rejoined, musingly, "a very great deal was talked about the spirit world. There were *séances* in which persons conversed with the dead. It was declared that spirits roamed the earth, taking at times visible forms; there were, too, mesmerists and biologists, who were said to have the will—power I think they called it—of influencing inferior minds to act as they willed them to do—to exercise, indeed, a supreme sway over them, making them follow them like docile children, and obey any commands they uttered."

"She paused, and again a palpable thrill ran through her frame.

"Well!" he ejaculated, impatiently.

With a half-stupefied look, she continued—

"When that stranger turned his eyes on mine, it seemed suddenly to me as if they possessed an attraction, which in spite of myself, in defiance of a kind of horror, of repugnance, would compel me to—to follow whither he led—I feel that I must go—that I should be helpless, powerless to resist—that, at all risks, sacrifices, in the teeth of a terrible loathing, I must obey his will. Absurd, is it not?"

Mr. Athol looked at her blanched, lovely face, and his teeth for a moment grated.

"It is preposterous madness," he cried, fiercely. "All those mesmerising humbugs, those swindling mediums—those—those lying vagabond biologists—ought to be hanged!"

His enraged impetuosity restored Lydia to a sense of the situation, and she smiled at her own weakness, although she became more reserved even than before.

Mr. Athol, while speaking, remembered that he had promised to pay the yacht—named, as he had thought, so appropriately, being so graceful and beautiful an example of the shipwright's art, "The Queen"—a visit while she was lying at Gravesend; but now he resolved to do nothing of the kind, because as he had no idea of separating himself from Lydia even for an hour, she must necessarily accompany him, and would therefore be once more under the glare of the bright, dark eyes, seen on board the yacht.

Not but what he held the impression which had seized Lydia to be a fantasy of the brain, and a thing as a reality to be regarded as beyond contempt; still he did not consider it to be a piece of sagacity to parade her before that impertinent and elderly puppy, merely to show him with what immeasurable scorn, they looked upon him and his mesmerizing powers too.

Oh, love! oh, love! Mr. Athol, as yet, had not begun to ask himself whether there was really such a thing as love at first sight—or second sight—and, what was quite as inconsiderate, he had not attempted to question the feeling which made him couple a horsewhip and a pistol with the face of the India officer, or look upon Mr. Fisell, wide as was the interval between the pair, with aversion.

Had he even now begun to trace those emotions back to their source, he would probably, under an impulse of discretion, hailed a boat and returned to London; as it was, he continued his voyage, and went on sinking deeper and deeper still in that flood, so delightfully intoxicating when the waters are smooth and yield favorably; so distressing, agonizing, maddening when they beat and buffet adversely.

Mr. Fisell now advanced, and passing Mr. Athol with a kind of dignified unconsciousness of his presence, he dropped his eyelids quite over his eyes, and, with creamy inflation, said—

"The young ladies waits for you, Miss Smith. They distinctly refuse to touch a morsel till you come. Miss Camoy is quite in a way at your keeping them waiting so long, an' they are like a pack a young wolvelin's in mualin, 'ungry as 'unters, and vorashus to a hextent which isn't quite like young ladies."

There came no response to his words, for Lydia, unable to resist the temptation, had accepted the proffered arm of Mr. Athol, and young Mr. Templeton had run up to Lollie, caught her by the hand, and, certainly so far as she was concerned, quite unreluctantly led her away all but side by side with Mr. Athol and Lydia.

Opening his eyes at the silence, Mr. Fisell instantly perceived what had happened. His complexion changed to a sage green—he gnashed his teeth, and hot tears forced themselves into his eyes.

"I'm done for," he gulped, "boxed, corded, labelled, dis-patched. I love that gal—I love her to de-straction. I can't go back now if I would—I'll marry her, I must or—drown. Pheugh! and she flirting with him in her 'orty, cold way. I must look precious sharp though, there ain't a moment to lose! I'll declare myself to-day. He shall not play the part of the hartful villain and deliberately deceive her—no, I'll step between him and his prey. I'll—"

"Mr. Fisell!" screamed a voice, interrupting his soliloquy.

He looked up, and beheld Miss Camoy beckoning to him, and gesticulating in a very extravagant way.

In two words he consigned her to perdition, but he passed his fingers through his well-oiled, shining hair, and with a smiling face and an aching heart he tripped forward to meet her.

The saloon cabin was on the flush deck, well aft, very roomy, and was well provided with tables, rather narrow, it is true, but sufficiently wide to contain the light repast prepared for the young ladies. They were dressed with a wonderful degree of ornamentation, in the shape of glass epergnes filled with the finest, brightest, and sweetest smelling flowers then in bloom, all arranged with considerable skill and taste; there were likewise glass dishes holding dainty tarts and cakes, sweets, bon-bons, and confections of all kinds, looking, as one of the youngest maidens declared, as she screwed up her watering mouth, "perfectly lovely."

When Mr. Athol entered the saloon leading Lydia, pale as a ghost but for two round hectic spots, one on each cheek, the girls with one accord gave, not exactly a cheer, although there were two or three weak "hoorays" from some of the more juvenile in corners, who instantly crouched down, giggling as if they had done something naughty, but a kind of buzz of congratulatory acknowledgment, which sounded perfectly genuine, although the larger proportion fancied they each deserved the post of honor quite as well.

Lydia, cold and trembling, but outwardly as self-possessed as if conscious of her right to the station to which she had been elected, took her seat, and instantly each young lady followed her example.

There was a great attention to clothes, and arranging of skirts and crinolines, to avoid crumpling and creasing the muslins and silks. There was much pushing and fitting in, elbow and shoulder touching, and mutterings of "Oh, I say, Maxwell, don't scrondge so!" "Where are you driving to, Pennikett? I hav'n't a morsel of room!" "Annie, look how you are crushing my pannier," and such like observations; but in an almost incredible space of time every one was seated, and eyes were racing over the cold fowls, the meat and bird pies, the patties, and the puff tarts.

Oh, how beautiful it all looked to the vision of those whose daily dinners but too often consisted of a single sausage, a rasher of bacon, a "soldier"—*i. e.*, red herring—a boiled egg, a saveloy, and sometimes bread and butter or fried potatoes only.

To look at the young ladies, attired as they were, no one would have ever dreamed of the mysteries with which that large pan at the establishment became daily acquainted, and the many odors it evolved; but then it was the old story of stomach and back, and the latter, as in the feminine mind it always should, came best off.

As if kind thoughtfulness and generous consideration were combined to add to the charms of that lovely and profusely-garnished board, the young men from the hosiery, glove, and umbrella departments now silently, but briskly and smilingly, filed in, and took their places behind the young damsels, in order to act the parts of willing and amiable attendants. Mr. Fisell, looking ghastly, and wearing the deportment of Pluto at a banquet of inferior demons who had recently offended him, stalked in, after having been hauled along the deck by Miss Camoy, and glared around him, fastening his eyes eventually on Mr. Athol as if he had it in his mind to make his luncheon off him.

He had been instructed to take charge of the young men while Miss Camoy looked after the young ladies, so that no one of them, in the fullness of exhilaration, should advance beyond the bounds of discretion by a too lively behaviour.

Not that, as yet, it was in any degree necessary, for the sprightly had a restraint in the well-behaved among them, and a judicious frown now and then had already curbed the thoughtless vivacity of two or three whose sense of enjoyment exhibited indications of beginning to overflow.

Even the luncheon commenced with a curious kind of silent decorum; but it very quickly faded away under the influence of cold fowl and ham, and bottled stout and pale ale.

Sherry was on the table, it is true, and every young fellow behind his charge gallantly filled her glass with the wine. Very few, however, ventured beyond the first sip or two, and some bolder spirits declaring a preference for "bitter," the demand for it became general, and it was quaffed with a gusto which created a fierce thirst beneath the vests of the cupbearers for the nonce.

After the second or third quaffing, coldness began to take flight, eyes took a wider range, and tongues found the leash slipped from them. Only a few minutes, and all the young ladies were talking at once, eating and talking, giggling and talking, darting out arrowy glances and talking, while the young men were more active in dancing here and there to secure for their fair trusts some coveted sweet or confection than they were in the halls of business.

And now came the rustling and cracking of bon-bons, the reading of mottoes, shouts of mirthful laughter, interchanging of sentimental looks, and general clatter and delightful animation.

Mr. Athol had been quietly but sedulously attentive to Lydia, but she scarcely touched anything to eat, and moistened her lips only with a little water, while Lollie, who was by her side, was paying the greatest attention to all the niceties which young Mr. Templeton was crowding on to her plate.

"Do have some sherry, Miss Leslie," urged the young gentleman, moving her filled glass nearer to her.

"Don't like it," she answered with a shrug. "It puts me in mind of camomile tea. I would sooner have some bitter beer."

"My opinion exactly," he exclaimed, with a snap of his fingers, as he made off to obtain a bottle of Bass.

"You are thoughtful," presently observed Mr. Athol, who had been watching Lydia's features attentively.

She was apparently oblivious of all that was going on around her, and he did not like the expression of her features.

She started at the sound of his voice, and turned her eyes to his, only to remove them with some little confusion.

"Am I?" she replied, vacantly, quite unconscious of what she was saying.

"You are, indeed," he remarked gravely. "I had hoped that the enjoyment you can see proceeding so actively round you, would have prevented your thoughts straying in a direction which I imagine can scarcely be likely to prove advantageous to you."

She heard him, seemingly, without comprehending his words

"You were thinking of that sunburnt man on board the yacht we passed," he pursued, reprovingly, without any right or title to take upon himself the office of her mentor.

"I was," she returned, in a low, abstracted tone, and with a perceptible shiver running through her frame.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Lollie, with widely-opened eyes, as she noticed that shudder. "Why, Lyddy, somebody's walking over your grave!"

Mr. Athol started in his turn, and closed his right hand tightly with an angry impulse.

"I wish I had not seen him," murmured Lydia, as if speaking in a dream.

"Seen him—seen who?" asked Lollie, quickly, and placing her hand on Lydia's wrist, rather sharply tightened it.

A faint cry escaped from Lydia's lips. She lifted her fingers to her temples, and for a moment pressed them over her eyes; then she looked wonderingly round her, and mechanically uttered—

"Have I been dreaming?"

Lollie laughed derisively, as at the moment Mr. Charles Templeton handed to her, with a kind of delighted briskness, a glass of sparkling ale, bright as sherry. She held it up to Lydia.

"Look at this, Lyddy, and let your lips water," she ejaculated, with her little, fat, rich laugh. "You have been wool-gathering—here's the reality. 'Bitterbeah,' as the man in the song says. May the present moment be the worst of our lives. Hip, hip—"

And she interrupted herself with a convulsive burst of mirth, because Mr. Charles Templeton nearly choked himself in trying to empty his glass of beer to her sentiment.

Lydia smiled vacantly, but, with a sigh, almost immediately relapsed into her former abstraction.

Mr. Athol, who observed this, knitted his brows, and felt a strange depression such as he had never known before. He bent his face down near to hers, and in a half fierce, half arrogant tone, as if questioning a criminal, demanded, in an undertone—

"Do you intend to persist in your statement that you have never seen that sunburnt man on board the yacht before to-day?"

She started at the sound of his voice, and at its asperity. For an instant she returned his look with a haughty, resentful expression, but her eyes lowered with the intense eagerness of his, and in quiet sadness, but with that irrepressible shiver, she responded—

"It is truth I have never seen him before to-day."

"But—perhaps—you would be—nothing loth—to meet him again?" he remarked with a sarcastic smile, although he forced his words out with some difficulty.

"I pray I may never see him again," she returned, with a singular emphasis.

Mr. Athol drew a deep breath—it was very much like a sigh of relief.

However, habitually keeping his emotions under control, he suffered his gratification to have vent in increased attentions to Lydia. So delicate were they, so assiduous, yet so gentlemanly and so full of respect, that, being perfectly competent, and withal, no doubt, willing to judge them and appreciate them, she could not fail to feel very grateful to him. Ay, and proud and happy too, but for the thought of her poor condition, her miserable home, and the hateful woman who reigned over it, and whom she was forced to call her mother, in absolute ignorance of the existence of another on whom she could justly and gladly bestow that endearing appellation.

It must not be supposed that Mr. Fisell attended to the duties to which Miss Camoy convoyed him without keeping, as he promised himself, the "hi of a spinx" on Mr. Athol and Lydia, or that he observed the unremitting attention of the junior partner in the firm with even a forced acquiescence. It must be remembered that the beauty of the fair Lydia had been daily, for some months, playing like a beam of sunlight directed through a magnifying-glass upon his heart, and had burnt a hole in it before Mr. Athol had even become acquainted with her existence. Mr. Athol, as yet, did not know the depth of the impression this young lady's singular attractions had made upon his affections. Mr. Fisell had for some time suspected their power as far as he was himself concerned, and now he knew beyond a doubt that he was, as he had graphically termed it, "done for"—that he was over head and ears in love with that "bewtiful gal," and that without her, life would be to him more utterly valueless than a blank in an Austrian lottery. Consequently, he meant business—that is marriage—and he was morally certain and convinced that Mr. Athol did not—that for a pleasant whim he meant to inflict upon her misery, destruction, and ruin.

He felt it to be his bounden duty to interfere at the earliest possible moment, because, if Miss Smith was to become Mrs. Fisell, he would prefer that she should not before that happy hour lavish too much of her tenderness on another of his sex, even though he happened to be a junior partner in his "'owse."

At first he tried to telegraph to her looks of caution. He shook his head when he thought Lydia's eyes were wandering toward him, and made extravagant gestures toward Mr. Athol, for which Miss Camoy asked him why he was making himself a maniac, and some of the young gentlemen hinted that he had begun to "mop" rather early.

Finding his gestures unheeded, he assumed a sad, pensive, worn, forlorn look, in the hope that she might detect the sorrow he vainly endeavored to conceal, and ask him, in the words of the poet—

"Why so pale and sad, fond lover—prithee, why so pale?"

If she only would, it would give him the opportunity of bringing about an *eclaircissement*, and so put an effectual end to the wicked intentions of the junior partner.

Unfortunately, his features were not suited to look well under a sorrowful aspect. They were not straight, as if, in early youth, his head had been by accident jammed between the street door and the door-post, and his lineaments had never resumed their proper position. One eye was higher than the other, and although he did not actually squint, no one would have liked to hazard a wager that he did not. His nose was aslant too, and he smiled always with one corner of his mouth up toward his cheek-bone. Cheerfulness, and even hilarity, when betrayed upon his face, was tolerable, because it always provoked mirth; but when he adopted the woebegone aspect, it created a feeling of pain, for his features being all awry, it seemed as if something dreadful had happened inside his skull, and had thrown eyes, nose and mouth into the wildest confusion.

Miss Camoy observed the gnawing anguish developed on Mr. Fisell's countenance, and with woman's quickness of penetration jumped correctly to the cause. She had watched the restless wanderings of his uneven eyes, and the effect upon her was to confirm her enmity to Lydia—to determine her to contrive to obtain her discharge from the house, even if she trumped up some lying accusations against her to effect it, and if she could induce Fisell to become her attached spouse, to "serve him out" after that auspicious event, in a way to make him almost hourly call upon the tomb to take him to its cold bosom.

During the luncheon he had made several efforts to approach Lydia; but Miss Camoy, divining his intention, had contrived to intercept him by rather cleverly inciting some of the more lively and unabashed damsels to make a demand upon his services. As he could not avoid executing the tasks they imposed on him, unless by positive refusals, which might lead to inconvenient explanations, he endeavored to comply with their wishes; but as he continued to glare at Mr. Athol, and to fling appealing, entreating, doleful glances at the unconscious Lydia, he made such mistakes as to excite shrieks of derisive laughter, and remarks in which the irreverent appellations "Fizzle" and "poor old Fizz" were but too audible.

Unable to endure the badinage which, under the influence of the good things and the nice beverages, began to grow louder and less reserved, he secretly seized a carving-knife, slipped it under his waistcoat, meditating he knew not what—fate, relentless, remorseless fate, must decide for him—and made his way to the deck.

But not unseen by Miss Camoy, who, also perceiving that the mirth was taking a louder tone than perhaps discretion prescribed, sent one of the young ladies up to Lydia with an intimation which made her rise from her seat and prepare to leave the cabin. The young ladies instantly followed her example.

Each damsel, who had secured a smiling attendant in a frock coat, with a rose or a carnation in his button-hole, contrived to be led by him to the upper deck over the saloon, and to prepare for the "graceful evolutions of the mazy dance."

Fisell was, however, not to be diverted by this agreeable and very general arrangement from the design he had formed, and he edged and sidled until, in spite of the fiery and resentful glances, the jerks of the head, and the turnings up of the nose with which Miss Camoy favored him, he contrived to take up a position a few feet from where Lydia, with downcast eyes and a faint pink tinge on her fair cheek, stood listening to soft words uttered in an undertone by Mr. Athol, and accompanied by looks in which intense admiration was absolutely undisguised.

It seemed that Fortune felt she could grant the distracted Fisell one curl of her usually rigid lips, and yield him, if only for an instant, the opportunity for which he was so sorely yearning.

The steward suddenly appeared, and made a confidential communication to Mr. Athol, and that gentleman at once followed him to the cabin. Like an eel pursued by a pike, Fisell wiggled himself instanter to the side of Lydia, whose slightly flushed cheeks and happy smile were as a gangrene to him. Dispensing with ceremony, and darting sparks of fire from those eyes of his, at different elevations in his forehead, he snarled, in a half guttural, half sepulchral tone—

"Miss Smith, listen to words of warning from a true, a devoted friend, whose right harm and 'art is your own to command. Mr. Athol's attentions to you is too reckless and barefaced; his notahuns to you is ditto, likewise palpable to the eyes of every young persing on the boat. 'Ave you asked yourself what they mean? Do they mean love, honor, and obey? Nothink of the kind!—nothink—nothink! No! What is he? what are you? Ah! He is the son of a de-yuke—a de-yuke, Miss Smith. You are a sewing-machine ga—lady. 'Ave you forgotten that it's a lord as is whisperin' foolery an' rubbish in your ears? Do you recollect at the same moment that you are a working-gal? That's all! On'y a work-gal! What, then, do his speeches flattery mean to you? Wrong, shame, sin, wickedness, betrayal, ruin, destruction—a 'orrid leap from Waterloo-bridge on a cold, wet, black night, into the dirty and filthy river below. Reflect—remember! Beware, or despair!"

He saw Mr. Athol returning, and shot away as abruptly as he came.

Poor Lydia!

He could have said nothing, had he thought and planned ever so cunningly, so effective to answer his purpose as this speech.

A thousand memories whirled through her brain like a ghastly sleet of dead leaves borne on a wintry blast.

She shrank back to the vessel's side, faint, shivering, agonized, as if he had stabbed her to the heart.

Her newly-budding happiness was chilled, withered, as if it had been suddenly smitten by a killing frost.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE THIN END OF THE WEDGE.

As if in the very harshest dissonance with her thoughts, the band struck up a lively galop, and there seemed to her to ensue a mad whirling and tearing to and fro, a wild laughing, a giddy chattering, a frenzied mirthfulness, when there should have been only mourning and wailing, for her soul was full of woe, and her heart was like to break.

The vessel, too, seemed to rush more swiftly than ever through the water, tossing and eddying, as if that were joyous and happy too. And the river appeared to become fuller of vessels of all kinds, speeding in every direction like whirling swallows, and the air was fresher, the sky bluer, the sun brighter, than they had been. Everything near, around, above her looked instinct with sparkling animation—everything but her own thoughts and her own heart.

In her brain was blank despair—in her heart the coldness of death.

She knew that Mr. Athol had resumed his place at her side, and with the words of Mr. Fisell ringing in her ear, she yearned to spring upon the gunwale of the boat, and give herself and her sorrows to the swirling, careering waters beneath.

She heard him speaking, and the rich, soft tones of his voice droned like the notes of a death-knell sounding from no great distance—not so very far. She did not catch his words, or at least comprehend them. She wished she could not hear them, wished she had never heard them.

He bent over her so that she felt his warm breath play on her cheek.

"Lydia, look at yonder cloud of contending yachts," he half whispered, pointing in the direction in which they were swiftly tacking and wearing across the river; "how like a fleet of young swans or white doves they appear skimming to and fro."

It was the first time he had ventured to call her Lydia: he the son of a duke, and she—ONLY A WORK-GIRL.

Involuntarily she raised her eyes to his, and impulsively—nay, incontrollably—her look was reproachful—not resentful—it was rather replete with anguish than anger, and Mr. Athol, as if already accustomed to read the changes in her beautiful and expressive features, detected it without being for a moment able to interpret it. His remark had been so very simple it was impossible it could have contained a word to offend her—yet why that upbraiding look, divested though it was of anything approaching wrath?

Mr. Athol by nature was impetuous and impulsive too. He was quick in his perceptions, and prompt in coming to an understanding. He had an excessively refined sense of honor, and whatever seemed to trench upon it derogatorily, made the hot blood course through his veins hotly and furiously.

Without reflection or hesitation he fastened upon her an eager look of inquiry. He exclaimed, with anxious earnestness, although quite in an undertone—

"I have uttered something to displease, wound you. What have I said? Pray tell me, that I may recall it, and ask your pardon."

It seemed as if she was quite unable to bear his eager questioning and only too ardent gaze, for she turned her eyes away, but not before he perceived that they were brighter than they had yet been, but only with glistening tears.

He was amazed, and racked his brain to find the cause. What had he said? What had he done? How had he committed himself?

"Lydia," he ejaculated, "what, in the name of heaven, have I said or done to pain you?"

She turned quickly to him and without reflection or forethought, but under the pressure of a heart full to overflowing, rejoined, hastily—

"Mr. Athol—sir—you have—been only very kind—too kind to me. I know I ought to be grateful, very grateful, for the attentions and the honors you have accorded to me, and I suppose—I ought to be very proud too—but—I cannot help it—I am not. The whole arrangement seems to me a distressing absurdity—a mockery—"

"Lydia!"

"There again, sir, you make me feel the false position in which I am placed," she rapidly and impetuously rejoined. "You show me what a counterfeit I am—"

"You are queen to-day," he urged, interposingly.

Her brow fell.

"Think of me, sir, as you will—as perhaps you must," she continued, with a deepening sadness but unquestionable firmness in her tone. "Yet I entreat of you also to think of me from my own point of view, and while I am entitled to your respect—while it will be my determination, as it is my duty to strive to command it, remember, sir, that you are the son of a peer, and I am—am—only a work-girl."

He made a gesture of impatience, but she raised her hands almost imploringly to him.

"I respect you now," she pursued, a little more rapidly. "I wish so much to continue to do so. I repeat I am grateful for your kindness and for your thoughtful courtesies, but I wish them to cease—I request that they may end here—"

"But, Lydia," he interrupted, half angrily.

Again she stopped him.

"Think for a moment, Mr. Athol," she proceeded, urgently, "and you will see that I have not spoken a moment too soon. The distance that separates us, by the distinctions of society in birth, and the relation in which we stand to each other as employer and servant, forbids the familiar use of my Christian name by you, as it forbids me to permit it, or listen to it, without an irrepressible pang. The good name of a poor girl, Mr. Athol, is too easily and too often tarnished by the breath of scandal, and as it is all that I have to sustain me through my future career in mere bread-winning, I beg, I implore, I pray you, to cease—at least, to confine your attentions no more to me, but share them with others—to maintain the true dignity of your position in order that I may not forget mine."

The last two words were scarcely audible, yet he heard them distinctly enough.

She glided gently from him, and he stood like one overwhelmed, dazed, powerless to move a muscle.

A true gentleman in soul, mind, spirit, he at once comprehended to the full the propriety of her but too suggestive remarks, and a rush of emotions swept over him almost like a tornado. His eyes mechanically followed her graceful form, as she receded from him in search of her friend, Lollie, who was enjoying herself without one *arrière pensée*, and he muttered, emphatically—

"She is a queen!"

Ah! but not for him.

He started as if a probe had been thrust into his heart.

She was only a working-girl, and he was of a descent as old as the hills in Inverness-

shire, and as proud as it was ancient. The interval between them was indeed very wide.

But she had attracted, fascinated him, and was he to give her up thus? Was that rare and beautiful example of heavenly handiwork to be consigned to the rude custody of some ugly, ungainly lout, because their positions in society were on a level?

Such an object as Fisell, with his distorted visage? He ground his teeth together, and, with something approaching an expletive, vowed that such a monstrous anomaly should not be permitted to obtain.

Yet what could he do to prevent it? Could he marry her himself? A cold tremor ran over his frame, and he partly staggered to the vessel's side, and pressed his hands to his temples.

But because she was so fair, so beautiful, so worthy to be a queen, was he to set himself to win her love, and, having conquered it, doom her to shame—to live the life of an outcast?

He pressed his closed hand against his breast, and turned his handsome face to the sky. No! not for worlds—not though he bartered his own happiness to secure hers.

No—a tremendous sigh such as never before had troubled his breast struggled to his throat, and made its escape. It was clearly his duty to comply with her request, to pay her no more attention than gentlemanly courtesy demanded throughout the remainder of the day, and after that—forget her.

Yes, forget her; perhaps, after all, it would prove an easier task than he thought it looked at this moment, and what could it be to him after to-day whose attentions she received—whom she married?

Again we are forced to admit that something like an anathema burst from his lips, and he turned his aching eyes once more to where he perceived that she had removed herself. He saw, with a curious sensation of indignation, that "the man," Fisell, had once more placed himself by her side, that he was bending his lop-sided visage close to her ear, and, judging by the remarkable movements of his features, he was under the influence of an excitement not raised by pleasurable emotions. He gesticulated, too, and appeared to be very much in earnest.

That was a sharp, excoriating pang which forced its way through Mr. Athol's chest, as he asked himself by what secret right Fisell thus addressed himself to her. It could not be that they were already matrimonially engaged? He felt cold and sick at the bare thought: but he did not ask himself whether this arose from an incipient feeling of jealousy. If he had, it would have told him how fast a hold the girl's wondrous charms had already taken of his senses, and he might have retreated—or, at least, have remained where he now stood, watching.

But there is very little cool calculation in the mind of youth in love affairs. It was a pretty strong fascination which had brought him on board the vessel that day, and the entrancement had been so mightily strengthened, that even after Lydia's appeal to him he found himself growing restive when he counselled himself growing restive when he counselled himself to respect it.

He had as she quitted him made an instant resolve not to speak to her again for an hour at least; but now, as he noticed the pained expression on her white face, and that her beautifully arched brows were contracted, he was positive that she was not a gratified listener to Fisell's urgent observations, and though he might mentally arrange not to persist in his attentions to her for the remainder of the day, it was clearly his duty to prevent her being annoyed by any one else.

Accordingly, he decided to dismiss Mr. Fisell peremptorily with the figurative insect in his ear, but Fisell saw him advancing and "abolished" himself, though he did so with a malignant scowl of hatred and malice which was not likely to further the happiness of Mr. Athol in the direction in which he believed he was pushing it.

When the latter once more stood by the shoulder of Lydia, he saw that her mental torment had been deepened, and that unbidden tears stood on her eyelids. Her trembling upper lip was fastened by her teeth, and the bitter sigh struggling for escape was forced back. Whatever had in the short interval which had separated them been, in the swift urgings of pride in his breast backing up the counsels of discretion and prudence, those tears put them all to flight; and, bending his eyes upon her, flaming with anger, he exclaimed, between his teeth—

"What has that fellow been saying to you? Conceal nothing from me, I entreat you, Miss—Miss—Lydia!"

He almost shouted the last word.

She started, and looked into his face with expanded eyes. For an instant she felt what intense happiness it would be to lay her aching head upon his shoulder, and confide all her sorrow to him; but only for an instant, for she lowered her eyes hastily, and receding some paces, she murmured—

"I entreat you, Mr. Athol, to remember the appeal I have made to you."

He followed her without uttering a word as she glided away until she had reached the side of the vessel, and turned her eyes toward the clustering yachts in the distance. Then he said in low, but in his richest tones—

"I am not unmindful of what you have said. I wish you to believe that I fully comprehend the force of your observations, and that they command my profound respect. I request you also to credit me with so much of the spirit of a gentleman, as to feel assured that I neither will nor can act in any manner calculated to wound your self-estimation in the eyes of others any more than in your own. Do you believe me?"

He asked this last question with an emphasis that almost startled her. She turned her eyes to his—alas! they were not dry yet.

"I will," she faltered, "if you will but leave me."

"For the present?" he said, interrogatively, and not very distinctly.

"Forever!" she ejaculated, with an uncontrollable burst; and then, with a strong effort to control her emotion and to appear calm and cold, she added, "You understand me, sir—you will, I am sure. Our paths have crossed each other's but for a moment, but they separate here—now—and forever!"

Again she would have moved away, but he detained her.

"Pardon me one moment," he urged, a little huskily, for breast and brain were in a whirl and ferment such as he had never before experienced. "I cannot quite assent to—to your dictum—surely it is somewhat derogatory to the principles of us both. At least, for to-day, in the position of honor conquered by your own merits, you are entitled to no ordinary attention, especially from me; and, indeed, were I now abruptly to quit you I should, perhaps, invite the very remarks you are naturally so desirous not to be called into life. Trust me! You shall not have to reproach yourself for any weakness by my default, and—and—it may yet happen I shall be able to prove to you that blood is thicker than water."

It seemed as if that expression had been wrenched from him, so remarkable was the emotion with which he uttered it, and if ever man bent a look of mingled passionate love and admiration on any fair young creature in the world Mr. Athol did upon Lydia.

Perhaps it was well for both that Lollie came running up to them at that moment, with flushed features, dancing eyes, and laughing lips—showing two rows of white, pearly, even teeth, of which any young lady in the land might have been proud.

"Oh, Lyddy, dear!" she cried, joyously. "I am enjoying myself so—I never was so happy in all my life, were you? I have danced every dance—First Set, Lancers, Caledonians, and two beautiful round dances without one accident, except to tumble old Fizz and Mamma Game-eye over an old man on a stool while he was drinking his stout. Why don't you dance? Mr. Athol, sir, if you please, ask her to dance. Do Lyddy, come and join our set—why, Lyddy—why, Lyd—what is the matter with you—you look so pale and dismal? Has anything upset you—has—"

She halted, and turning sharply to Mr. Athol, gave a scrutinizing glance at his features. She saw that they were flushed and excited, and with a kind of affrighted, anxious expression on her pretty face, she passed her arm round the waist of Lydia, and whispered, though not exactly inaudibly—

"Has any one offended you? Tell me, Lyddy dear—tell me, darling. No one shall do it while I am near you—no, not if he were the King of England. There!"

"Lyddy essayed a faint smile, and murmured—

"No one indeed, Lollie, thank you. Do not trouble yourself about me—do enjoy yourself. I am quite as happy as I can be—indeed I am."

"No one will attempt to offend Miss Smith while I am near her," remarked Mr. Athol, a little loftily, for he quite understood Lollie's implication; "and with respect to dancing, you see we are close to the landing-pier at Gravesend, and for a short time that pleasant pastime must have a cessation."

Lollie looked toward the prow of the vessel, and saw that they were fast approaching the principal landing-place, and her mind instantly became in a whirl of distraction, doubt and anxiety, for she found herself oscillating between two powerful influences.

"Oh, Lyddy, what are you going to do?" she asked, eagerly. "Old Fizz—I mean," she corrected herself, as she caught the eye of Mr. Athol, "Mr. Fisell and Miss Camoy, with some of the girls—young ladies—are going to land here, and go on to Rosherville. Mr. Fisell says you are going there with him. Are you?"

"No!" ejaculated Mr. Athol, peremptorily.

Both Lydia and Lollie looked at him with surprise.

"I will speak to Mr. Fisell myself," he continued, haughtily. "How dare he attempt to alter the existing arrangements?" Then, addressing himself to Lydia, he added, "It was thought by the members of my firm, in arranging this trip, as it takes place under exceptional circumstances, that it should be exceptionally treated. As there will be an interesting yacht race to the Nore and back, it was thought to be for the best that the steamer should accompany it, and our party also; every description of refreshment has been provided with that view. The party now landing had previously engaged places by tickets in the steamer to-day; we were, therefore, compelled to bring them. They will, however, go their way, as we shall go ours, and we shall pick them up on our return. Excuse me for a few moments."

Raising his hat he hurried away. Lollie watched him for an instant, and then, clutching Lydia by the wrist, she said, hurriedly—

"Mr. Athol has not been saying anything unpleasant to your feelings. Lyddy, dear, do tell me. If he has we will go on the pier now, and go back by the train, even if it breaks my heart to do it."

Lydia shook her head, but did not answer.

"But he has been talking tender to you, I am sure," she pursued, dogmatically; "his cheeks were as red as carnations, and he looked disturbed, as if—if—as if he were in love with you. But, then, how can he help that?"

Lydia, as she heard this, grew pale as death, placed her cold fingers for an instant on her eyelids, and looked as if she had been suddenly stunned.

Then, slightly recovering herself, she said, hastily—

"I—I—think we will—land, and proceed home by the train. I do not feel well. At least, I will go alone."

"That you will not," rejoined Lollie, firmly. "If you go, I will go with you."

"Now, then, any more for shore?" shouted a hoarse voice.

Lydia hurried toward the gangway, followed by Lollie, and had crossed, when she found herself abruptly arrested by a gentleman, who uttered a cry as if an arrow had pierced his brain, as her pale face was abruptly presented to him.

He caught her by the wrist, and in impetuous and imperious tones demanded with intense eagerness—

"Girl, what is your name?"

Startled by his manner and tone, she shrank back, and looked in his face with terrified wonder.

A faint cry instantly escaped her lips too. She had seen that face before—when?—where?—in a picture?—in a dream?—a long-forgotten dream?

A second more, and they were separated. Still, as in a dream, she heard a voice addressing her questioner exclaim, hurriedly.

"This way, St. Leonards, our boat is in sight—by Jove! we shall lose it if we do not look sharp. Hi! hi! waterman!"

At the same moment her wrist was once again grasped, and now she recognized the tones of Mr. Athol. They rang sharply, peremptorily, almost discordantly, in her ear, for they were excited, if not angry—

"Miss Lydia—you will return on board, please. Mr. Fisell and Miss Camoy will not land, and the—the—the—young ladies remain, too—they must not lose their Queen!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

☞ EARTHQUAKE.—Humboldt, who witnessed several earthquakes, said that one never gets used to them, but, on the contrary, his feelings of dread are intensified at each successive one which he experiences. All beasts and birds partake of man's fear, and seem panic-stricken. Humboldt accounts for man's inability to become accustomed to, and consequently not to dread, earthquakes, by saying that whatever we have at any time or under any circumstances considered shaky, the earth has always stood firm, and when we find that tossing beneath our feet, it seems as though the very bottom of things had been knocked out.

☞ Rather an inefficient teacher was that one who, in Haverhill, Massachusetts, undertook to chastise a boy pupil. She found herself unequal to the task, as the boy came very near chastising her. She called in the lad's father to assist, and this tremendous youngster proved too much for both of them. Milder measures were adopted, and finally the youth consented to take his flogging, if he could have his choice from a litter of puppies in the neighborhood!

☞ LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.—Everywhere men and women, born and bred ladies and gentlemen, value their reputation as such too highly to risk it by any rudeness or uncourteousness. They may upon occasions be frigidly polite, but polite they will always be.

Bertie's Escapade.

BY MARGARET AUDLEY DOUGLASS.

"Now, at last, I'm safe!" and with these somewhat remarkable words the speaker threw herself into a chair and looked around her with evident satisfaction,—a satisfaction which the small, rather poorly-furnished room hardly seemed to warrant. "Once away from that old bear and his charming nephew," continued the girl, aloud, "my husband that was to be—only *was*, not *is*, thank fortune! the next question is how am I to earn my living?" A few minutes' perplexed study of the ceiling seeming not to solve the problem, she recommenced her soliloquy:

"Only three dollars in my purse; I never thought to bring more. How idiotic! What *can* I do? Stop; I'll ask Jane."

Springing from her chair, she opened the door and flew down the one flight of stairs two steps at a time.

"Jane," she said, presenting herself at the door of a tiny kitchen; "Jane, what can I do?"

Seeming in nowise surprised at the young lady's sudden appearance or strange question, the hard-featured woman, never stopping her rolling-pin, replied briefly:

"You can come down-stairs without deafening a person next time, Miss Bertie, that's what you can do *first*."

"Yes, you old torment, but what next?" was the irreverent reply.

"Go home. Indeed, Miss Bertie, it beats all, the idea of you running off from home. You never saw the gentleman your guardian's picked out for you; perhaps you might like him after all—"

"Perhaps I might fly up to the moon, or something equally likely might happen! Bah! Jane, just forget about the gentleman, if you please; besides, I can't tell you anything about him. I know his first name is John, which is common enough by the by; but before I read his second, my wrath got the better of my curiosity, and I threw Mr. Duncan's letter into the fire, packed up, fled, and here I am."

"And you'd be a sight better at home."

"Exactly; nevertheless, I'm going to stay here." Clasping her hands behind her, Bertie began to walk up and down the narrow hall, evidently in deep thought. The light from the half-open door fell full upon her, bringing her black-robed figure into strong relief against the white wall. A hasty glance, and you thought her a child, she was so small; but a longer look and you saw she was at least eighteen, while her figure, though delicate, was exquisitely formed. Her face, by reason of the same delicacy, forfeited the right to be called beautiful in form, for it lacked roundness of outline; her hair was blue-black, and she wore it gathered into a careless knot at the top of her shapely little head; her eyes—but no one could ever describe Bertie Howell's eyes! They were somewhat long in shape, and of the deepest hazel, but when she was excited the pupil seemed to dilate, until the entire eye appeared to have grown suddenly black. When not speaking, she had a fashion of dropping her eyelids, and looking up at you from beneath her dark lashes, which gave her face a somewhat haughty look until she smiled, and then you were ready to declare it the sweetest ever seen.

Presently she paused in her walk, and came to the kitchen door—

"Jane, do you suppose I could take in sewing?"

"It's a hard life, Miss Bertie, and you don't know anyone to recommend you."

"Neither I do. But wait—I have an idea! I might teach; but I forgot, I have no reference. What *shall* I do?"

"Go home, Miss Bertie."

"I won't; so there!"

"A nurse? I might be that, only I'm afraid to touch babies; they are always so limber, you think every moment they'll fall to pieces."

"A pretty nurse you'd make, Miss Bertie. Why it only seems yesterday since I nursed you myself!"

"Then all I have to say is, your memory is shaky; it was more than eighteen years ago. Is that the only reason why I'd not make a good nurse, because you can't remember I'm grown up?"

"Nonsense; who'd take a nurse who wore such fine dresses?"

Bertie shrugged her shoulders as she glanced at her handsome silk; then said:

"Well, why can't I cook? I can boil eggs, toast bread, and make tea. I wonder if I could find a family willing to live on those three things?"

"Land save us! The child's demented!" and Jane burst into a shout of laughter at this last proposition. Bertie frowned with displeasure at the idea of indulging in such levity when a serious subject was under discussion, but in a minute she was laughing herself.

"I beg pardon, Miss Bertie, but, oh, dear, what an idea! Why, all folks like variety in their victuals—three things, oh, dear!" and Jane's gravity gave way again at the idea.

"Then as I can't be cook, I'll wait and look in the paper to-morrow morning. Now shall I set the table for tea?" Bertie asked, when she had recovered her breath. And presently she was as merry and busy over her work, as though she had not done the most foolish thing a girl ever did, thereby proving to her guardian, Mr. Duncan, that after ten years acquaintance with his ward, he had not yet learned, as he flattered himself he had, all the workings of the female mind, as it was embodied in little Bertha Howard.

"Number 84, —— street. This is the place, Jane. Yes, 84 is the number in the advertisement. Good-bye. I have some other places to look up if I fail here, so I'll not be at home until about dinner time."

After Jane left her, Bertie entered the house and rang the bell of a door that bore the name, John Ashley, Attorney-at-law. When it was opened, the office boy asked her to walk into the private office, when he went in search of Mr. Ashley. He had not to hunt long, for his employer was standing near the window of the inner office, reading a telegram. When Bertie entered, he looked at her with the greatest surprise depicted in his face; and as he crushed the paper in his hand, turned toward the window with a muttered, "As the copy books say, 'truth is stranger than fiction,' by Jove!"

He kept his face turned toward the street until the boy repeated a second time—thinking meanwhile his master had grown suddenly deaf—that a lady wished to see him.

Then he turned, and bowing politely, asked her to be seated.

Poor Bertie, not venturing to look at him, began hurriedly, "You advertised for a copying clerk in to-day's paper. Seeing the advertisement, I concluded to apply for the position." This little speech had been carefully prepared, and was delivered in as nonchalant a manner as she could assume.

"We hardly thought of taking a lady, for, in the first place, the position is not an easy one, and—"

"When I applied for it, I understood I should have to work," interrupted Bertie, impatiently.

A grave bow answered, and at the same time abashed her not a little. Then he added: "The handwriting is another point. Would you object to letting me see yours?"

Bertie did object seriously, for she had an uncomfortable sensation of being "ordered around," though both his words and manner were perfectly polite, and for an instant she thought of declining; but swallowing her indignation, she seated herself by the table and took up the pen. She wrote her name, "Bertha Meredith Howell," without thinking. As her pen formed the last letter, she made an impatient movement, and tearing off the strip, wrote her first and middle name, then handed it to the lawyer. He had been watching her keenly all the time. The strip of paper bearing her real name fell under the desk.

"A very good hand," was his comment, and presently Bertie found herself appointed *copying clerk to J. B.* Ashley, Esq.

"I have the place, Jane," was her triumphant exclamation on reaching home.

"Yes? But you don't mean to say they took you without a sign of a reference?"

"Yes, I do! Dear me, Jane, what *is* the matter?" The question was needed, for she had sunk into the nearest chair, with every symptom of incredulity. "There's nothing wonderful in it. I'm not to have charge of gold, but only old musty papers, which I could make no use of, even if I did suddenly turn dishonest, Jane"—and she interrupted herself with a stamp of her foot—"Jane, *please* stop staring at me!"

"Without a reference! Well, it beats all," ejaculated Jane, softly. Then, "Is he old, Miss Bertie?"

"Old? Yes, I believe so. Why?"

"I was just thinking—how old is the gentleman, your guardian's cousin?"

"His nephew, you mean? I don't know; but your question strikes me as irrelevant. Really, Jane, you seem to take a great interest in him. If he could only know! But do stop talking about him. Once for all, I'll die before I'll marry him!"

"I beg pardon for entering unannounced; but I knocked several times, and receiving no answer, concluded to walk right in. These words, following quickly upon Bertie's last speech, caused her and Jane to turn to the door in surprise. The owner of the voice was standing in the doorway. Bertie recognized him as Mr. Ashley. "I called to ask you not to come to the office until next Monday, as I have received a telegram, calling me out of town for a day or so. Good-morning, and good-bye until Monday." As he ended, he bowed and left the house.

Bertie had remained speechless during this short interview, for several reasons First, from surprise; secondly, because she had seated herself on the floor, the better to tease a much-enduring cat, and in that position her visitor surprised her; and lastly, because there was a queer expression, suggestive of mirth, about his mouth, which filled her with dismay. After he left, she continued to stare blankly at the open doorway.

"Who was that, Miss Bertie?"

"Mr. Ashley, of course; with a little ingenuity you might have guessed it, I should think," was the rather snappish reply.

"But you said he was *old;* and that gentleman wasn't more than thirty, or perhaps—"

"I hardly looked at him. But you bother me by chatting so. I don't mean to be cross, only—" interrupting herself, she caught up her bonnet, and flying up to her room, spent the rest of the morning drumming on the window-panes and singing *Le Rêveil, prestissimo,* two infallible signs that her mental horizon was overcast.

Three months passed by, and Bertie was still clerk in Mr. Ashley's office. Her duties were not very laborious; but still the close confinement and stooping over a desk all day, began to tell on her health. Besides, the young lady began to feel ill used; she had run away from home after the most approved fashion, to escape from marriage; and instead of her guardian feeling pangs of remorse for his cruel conduct, and causing the world to be searched, and advertisements put in all the papers, to the effect that "if B. M. H. would return, she might do as she liked, and all would be forgiven," he seemed to have forgotten she ever existed; and as the warm summer days became warmer, Bertie was often ready to cry with vexation, fatigue and—but we must not anticipate.

She saw a great deal of Mr. Ashley at this time—for after he had shown her what her work for the day was to be, he often lingered to talk, or rather *try* to talk—for Bertie's replies were brief even to the exclusion of politeness, and he found a conversation with her a very one-sided affair, until one day, by some chance word he offended her, and she in her usual impetuous way, made a stinging retort—the next instant she flushed scarlet, and was silent for the remainder of the day, hardly saying yes or no when he spoke to her. But he had found a way to break down her reserve, and from that time he laid traps to catch her; often so successfully that Bertie never noticed the snare until she was stopped in the middle of her sharp reply by his laugh.

He certainly was provoking, and though Bertie declared she hated him, she certainly spent a large portion of her time thinking of him—but that might have been from the intensity of her dislike.

One sultry August day Bertie sat in the private office copying a deed; it was fearfully warm, and her head ached badly, as her pen flew across the paper which she was trying to finish before the hour for closing up came.

From time to time her eyes wandered to the clock, and as the half hour struck she gave a sigh of relief—only thirty minutes more and she would be free.

When the hour struck, the copying was uncompleted, and she had just decided to lay it aside until the next day, when some one crossed the room and stopped at her desk.

She knew without looking up that it was Mr. Ashley. His desk was in the next room, and the last time she looked at the clock she had discovered, for she could see him distinctly from where she sat, that his book was lying on the floor, and his eyes were fixed on her face. As their eyes met he picked up his book and went on reading with a composure which exasperated Bertie—it was too far for her to observe that he held it upside down.

"You have not finished this, I see; well, just lay it by until to-morrow," he said.

"I believe I shall finish it to-day," she said shortly, determined to go on in spite of headache, just because he had advised the reverse.

He did not move away but stood leaning against the wall, smiling, for he understood his clerk's sudden fancy for working after office hours.

"Mr. Ashley, excuse me, but I think I am able to do this without supervision," she said, presently, in her iciest manner.

"Excuse me, Miss Meredith, if I say not—see there, you have made the man leave it to himself instead of to 'his heirs forever.' No, do not write over it," he said, "I will fix it in a minute." And taking out his penknife he began to scratch out, leisurely, the name she had just written.

He scratched away absently, his eyes fixed on the paper, but his thoughts anywhere but upon what he was doing. Bertie waited patiently; she knew there could but one thing result from such a protracted use of the knife, and that—a hole.

At last it came. Still he did not notice it but continued to apply the knife vigorously. Bertie waited until the hole became appallingly large, then said, sweetly—

"If you only had a pair of scissors, you could do that *so* much quicker."

"What?" he asked, rousing himself with an effort.

"Tear the paper to pieces, as you have been endeavoring to do for some time," she answered in the same tone.

"Pshaw, so I have!" Mr. Ashley looked somewhat guiltily at the large ragged hole.

"Will you give it to me now, sir? I must leave at once, and I will take it with me to recopy; you have spoiled the work of several hours!" she said, pettishly, holding out her hand for the paper.

"No, I will repair my own fault, or I should say the mischief I have done," he returned, absently.

Bertie rose and began putting away her papers. Her head ached terribly now, and every step she took seemed to increase the throbbing pain.

She was preparing to leave the room, when Mr. Ashley turned from the desk, saying:

"Miss Meredith, if you can spare the time, I would like to speak to you."

Bertie seated herself without replying.

There was a moment's pause, and then Henry Ashley said in a strained, almost harsh voice:

"Miss Meredith, you have been with us three months, I believe?"

Bertie bowed.

"For the next month, perhaps longer, there will be literally nothing to do in the office."

Bertie's face grew white, that meant her services were needed no longer.

"Nothing at all," he repeated, his eyes wandering to the window then. "My father and I have decided that your services will not be required for a month at least, so if it is agreeable to you, to-morrow will be your last day here until some further notice." His eyes came back to her and he smiled; he added in a lower tone: "As clerk, that is, for it's just possible we may not need one again, but—"

Bertie had risen from her chair, and was holding the door open. As he paused she said: "Good-afternoon, sir. I understand," and passed out.

Before he could reply, Mr. Ashley stood for a minute in dead silence, then muttered: "Understand! I'll be hanged if *I* do!"

The rain was falling in torrents, but Bertie hardly noticed it, or remembered she had no umbrella. She hurried along the crowded street, dashing recklessly before horses and into pools of water, thinking of nothing except her recent dismissal, and—but as she would have denied thinking of *him*, there is no need to mention what, despite Miss Bertie's denial, was a fact.

Presently she slackened her pace; the rain was beating in her face, but she only thought how cool it felt. As she walked along an umbrella was suddenly held above her head. Turning she met the owner face to face.

"Thank you. I will not deprive you of it, Mr. Ashley. Good-bye."

"You do not deprive me of it, but with your permission I will share its shelter with you," he said, coolly, smiling down at her. Bertie pressed her lips together and met his eyes with a defiant look, which made him smile again and caused *her* to feel more wretched than ever. After a few commonplaces, to which she hardly deigned to reply, he relapsed into silence, and no word was spoken for two or three blocks. Bertie walked as though she were in a dream, splashing heedlessly into puddles, and even forgetting to hold up her skirt, which last piece of forgetfulness caused Mr. Ashley to rouse himself from his revery and say: "Take care, Miss Howell, your dress is getting wet, I'm afraid."

Scarcely had the name left his lips, when Bertie came to a sudden halt, and looked at him with startled eyes. "Howell!" she repeated: "then you know—"

"That your name was not Meredith? Assuredly. But it was your whim to be called so, and of course I acquiesced," he returned coolly. Then added, "Perhaps you remember having written your real name that first day you called at the office? Afterward you threw the paper on the floor."

"And you read it?" she said, stung by the nonchalance of his tone.

"Assuredly," he repeated. "Shall we walk on?"

With a quick movement Bertie drew her hand from his arm, and sprang forward to cross the street. Trembling with excitement, and blinded by pain and fear, half way across she staggered and fell just as a large wagon rolled past; its driver made an effort to turn aside, but other vehicles blocked the way, and though several people sprang forward to save the girl, the horse's hoof struck her arm and shoulder, only prevented by John Ashley's strength—for his arm turned them aside—from crushing in her temple.

As she was placed in a carriage the pain caused by the movement restored her to consciousness; she saw that Mr. Ashley's arm supported her; she heard him order the man to drive "home," and for an instant forgot her pain as she met his eyes hungry with love and sorrow; then everything seemed to slip from her until they came to a stop, and she was lifted out and carried up a flight of steps into a house.

She heard some one say: "I have brought her home, Aunt Ellen," but the voice sounded far away, as if she was listening in a dream, and presently voices and everything seemed to fade away and nothing remained but a dull sense of pain.

For three weeks she lay very ill, sometimes talking aloud and living over the scenes of the past few months, and at others lying in a stupor, so deep it seemed like death, but at the end of that time she came slowly back to life, and one morning opened her eyes to find herself in a strange room, with nothing familiar around her, except Jane.

"Where am I?" she asked, trying to raise herself up.

"In bed, I should say. Lie down, Miss Bertie, and don't try to move the right arm yet awhile," was the only reply she received.

"But, Jane—"

"No, keep still, I'll not answer another question," and with that Jane resumed her sewing and her seat.

"But, where am I?" she asked again.

"At Mr. Ashley's aunt's house," was the short reply.

"Ah! she is better, I see, Jane; how much she is like her mother." Bertie turned her head in the direction of the voice, and saw an old lady seated near the window, netting; as she met the girl's eyes she rose and came to the bedside, saying, as she laid some fragrant tea roses on the pillow: "John sent you these and his best wishes with them. I must go and tell him how much better you are, and what a comfort it is to hear you talk like yourself. Why, my dear, the poor fellow has been half crazy about you—walking the floor night after night, and blaming himself that he didn't take better care of you that afternoon! But there, I forgot, I was not to talk or excite you, so I'll go and tell John the good news; good bye, my dear," and stopping short, with a gesture of dismay, the old lady bent down and kissed Bertie, then softly left the room.

"Who was that Jane, Mrs. Ashley?" asked Bertie, looking after her.

"Yes. Hurry up and get well, I want to take you out of this place home. The idea of choosing such a time and place to get run over!" said Jane, grimly. It was clear to see she was disturbed about something; every time Mrs. Ashley mentioned "John," her face assumed an expression of disgust, which seemed to indicate the gentleman was no favorite of hers.

"I should say the best place would have been—no place at all," replied Bertie with a faint smile and a little of her old manner. Then she was very quiet, playing with the roses, and once or twice her lips pressed them. After that she grew rapidly better, and in a week or two she was able to walk about her room.

One afternoon Mrs. Ashley declared she had been kept prisoner long enough, and that evening must be spent down stairs. Jane looked on this plan with decided disapproval and announced that *she* intended to spend the afternoon at her own house, telling Bertie privately. "And I'll get all ready to take you back to-morrow; goodness knows it would have been better if you'd acted like a Christian and married the gentleman your guardian chose."

After she left, Bertie curled herself up on a lounge and was soon fast asleep. Toward sunset she woke with a start to find John Ashley standing, with folded arms, looking at her. She started up and rubbed her eyes sleepily, for she was little more than half awake.

"Well, don't you intend to speak to me?" he asked, laughing.

She held out her hand, but instead of taking it, he looked keenly at her for a minute, then coolly bent and took her in his arms.

For a moment astonishment took away Bertie's breath, then striving to free herself she gasped, "You have no right—Mr. Ashley—"

"Haven't I?" he asked, composedly.

"Put me down *instantly!*" she said, growing red and confused.

"Listen, Miss Bertie, you have had your own way long enough, now I will have mine. Don't you think I deserve something for my constancy? Perhaps you don't remember a tall young law student who visited your guardian some years ago?—his nephew in fact—well, he remembers you. No, you can't go just yet. You ran away from home to get rid of him; it was fortunate he knew you, and was able to telegraph to your distracted guardian that you were safe. You see his memory was better than yours. Fate, you see, led you to his office; a second time you ran away, were run over, and that led to this. So far you have been remarkably successful," he said, laughing at her wondering face.

"And you are—"

"Mr. Duncan's nephew, whom 'you'll die before you'll marry.' Well, didn't I quote correctly?"

"Put me down—I will—I will go!"

"When I am ready to let you, which will not be soon—why, sweetheart, what is it?—why darling," his laughing tone changed, for he saw her lips quiver, and her eyes were fast filling with tears. "Forgive me, Bertie dear, but what could I do? If I'd *asked* you if you loved me, you would have vowed you didn't, and tried to make yourself believe it was so—nothing was left, but to take it for granted, was I very wrong?"

In spite of confusion and anger, Bertie was forced to smile, for there was truth in what he said.

"I was right then?" he asked, caressing her hair.

"Did I say so, sir?" she asked, half-defiantly.

"But neither did you say no, sweetheart," he returned, smiling at the flushed face, and drawing the struggling little figure nearer him in spite of her efforts to draw herself away. "You did not say no, Bertie."

"How can I refuse to give what you've 'taken for granted,'" she said, rallying and mimicking his tone as she looked shyly at him from beneath her long curling lashes.

"Ah, I perceive you have a prejudice against saying *yes*. I'm almost tempted to declare you're only happy when you are tormenting some one;" but still he drew her nearer to him.

"That evening in the office when you cut short my speech by declaring you understood, might I ask what you meant?"

"That you did not need a clerk any longer," she said gravely—

"True; but I don't think you understood I intended asking for a wife." A swift look of astonishment passed over Bertie's face, but her eyes gleamed mischievously as they met his.

"Well, what is it?"

"Nothing," she replied, demurely.

"Then we will join Aunt Ellen in the library," stopping as he reached the door, he said mournfully—

"When am I to have my engagement kiss? Never?"

"When you choose to take it," said Bertie with a soft little laugh. Before the words died on her lips the engagement kiss had been taken, not one but a dozen, and Bertie seemed suddenly to have thrown away her old wilfulness and defiance, for, instead of resisting his demands, she submitted patiently, and when, as he carried her down the stairs he bent his head and whispered a half prayer, half command in her ear, she raised her head obediently, and presently her red lips had given him their first kiss.

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A WORD TO MOTHERS.

DEAR EDITOR:—I write hoping some mother will read and profit by it.

The great reason so many persons marry unsuitably is because of the *haste* in choosing partners for life, and that *haste* is because of the want of sympathy between parent and child. Not getting it at home, they seek for it elsewhere, and content themselves often with a very poor apology of love.

It is not only the little ones that need fondling and tending, but the larger boys and girls. Now, I am twenty-two years old, receive a great deal of attention and admiration in society, am considered handsome and stylish (and would give it all to be petted by mother,) yet have no one to advise me, no one to trust, no one to tell my innermost thoughts to, and no one to direct me. If you should tell my mother I said the above, she would say, "Why, Lena knows better than I do." That may be, still "two heads are better than one;" and how much nicer we feel to unburden our minds, and know that some one really cares to hear all about us, and will not use the information against us at some future time.

My mother thinks a great deal of her children, has their interests at heart, and I think loves them, but she never says so, (now if you love any one, tell them so, once in a while, it does both of you good, and strengthens the tie between two souls.) She never lays her hand on my head and smooths the little worriments from off of my eyebrows, nor imagines that any of us think of anything she don't know about.

More susceptible young ladies become engaged, (I know plenty who do,) because they wish to be petted and have some one to listen to the annoyances flesh is heir too. Others make confidents of friends (?) who frequently turn against them, and use the knowledge for their own benefit, and hold the whip-hand over the feebler sister or brother. Such things ought not to be. Mothers, that is your place to fill.

How I long to be folded in my mother's arms, and be pressed to her heart, and tell her all my thoughts, the little vexations of the day; in fact, have her guide me, direct me, and, well—be a mother, counsellor, wisdom.

Knowing that such is the lack in mothers, I have constituted myself a sort of confidant for my feebler friends; you have no idea how many there are who have secrets to unburden, and which (in some cases) should be only for a mother's ears. Yet because they have found in me a sympathizer, the words are told to me. I have helped several ladies even older than myself; and many young men, with God's help, have been kept from vice and intemperance, by a kind word and hearty sympathy. So I think I have found my place in the world—that is to help those I meet over the rough places, and sympathize with those who wish sympathy as much as I do. Mothers, in conclusion, see that your daughters' ruin does not often rest on your shoulders.

Yours truly, A CONSTANT READER.

EARTH LOVE.

My darling, if beneath the sea,
With all its waves above my head,
I lay, and thou shouldst speak to me,
I think that I should quit the dead
And come to thee.

Could my lone spirit, lost in space,
Hear one fond sigh thy soul had given,
I'd fly to earth for thy embrace,
Nor grieve for a relinquished Heaven.

Hold but thy hand, thy loving hand,
To me, across the dark abyss;
And let me see thee waiting stand,
And back should I return to this,
From even the better land.

Give me the beatings of thy heart,
Give me the kisses of thy lips;
And let life's common joys depart—
The sun go down in dark eclipse.

My dearest, earth, nor cruel sea,
Nor even the boundless realms of space,
Could separate my soul from thee,
Or win me from my love's embrace,
Didst thou but wish for me.

LETTERS FROM ZIG.

'IDLE TEARS."

"Tears, idle tears,
I knew not what they mean;
Tears from the depths of some divine despair—"

And so forth. You've read it, I dare say, and it sounds very fine in poetry. But if there's any one thing which particularly worries a person out and tires a person to death, it's just exactly idle tears. Among the queer fish whom fate has done me the honor to cast in my way, is a middle-aged single woman who makes a pretence of working for her living. When she was younger, her family labored under the mistaken impression that she was a belle and beauty, and so let her have her own way in everything, no matter how unreasonable it was, and made a spoilt, peevish, spiteful, babyish creature of her, without a spark of brave womanliness about her. It was all very well as long as she was young, but it isn't a bit nice now. Quite the contrary, indeed. Some old maids run to cats. This old maid does not run to cats. This old maid runs to tears.

She has not a care or trouble in the world which is worth counting. She ought, "far as human eye could see," to be one of the cheeriest, sunshiniest, jolliest women alive. But she isn't. She is a perfect watering spout of tears. She says it does seem to her that she has more trouble than anybody in this world. If one of her brothers makes a bad horse-trade, she has to up and cry over it. She takes the whole public and private troubles of all her relations on her two shoulders. She feels for 'em. If one of her sisters has a mild matrimonial misunderstanding with her husband, as indeed every woman has a right to have, this incarnate fountain of tears sits up nights to weep over it. I can't see for my life what she has to do with the family squabbles, anyhow. It's none of her funeral. She has a good lot of grown nephews and nieces. Occasionally there is a wedding among the gang of young people. Whenever one of her nieces or nephews is married, this weeping old maid takes it as a personal insult. They break the awful tidings to her as gently as if it were news that her mother was about to be hanged. But the weeping spinster is invariably "overcome." First she takes out her handkerchief and mops her eyes with it. Then she removes her handkerchief, walls up her eyes wildly, and sinks backward. Then she mops her eyes again, and bursts forth into a volcano of hysterical sobs. Finally she mops her eyes resignedly, and murmurs in a voice like the tones of a heart-broken jewsharp:

"So foolish! so foolish!"

When there's nobody so foolish except just herself. One would think there was enough real trouble in the world without making a mountain out of nothing.

Another woman had the misfortune to marry a poor snivelling noodle for a husband. Women often do that. This woman's poor snivelling noodle of a husband went off and left her without any visible means of support. She was told he would do that before she married him. She didn't believe it. "Woman's faith" and all that nonsense, you know. Woman's faith is rather apt to be nonsense, particularly when it is founded on a poor noodle. Well, when this young woman's eyes were opened to her poor snivelling noodle, did she bless her stars that she was rid of him, and go to work in a brave, cheery way to make the best of matters? No; she didn't. She sat down and cried. She sobbed and snuffled half a day at a time, sometimes. Now, it doesn't sound nice to hear a grown woman cry, especially when she will persist in blowing her nose out loud. This forsaken wife lives with her friends, and they take care of her. Under the circumstances the least she could do would be to be cheerful, helpful and obliging. But she isn't. She sits down like an idiot, and snivels over the trouble she has brought upon herself. She makes no earthly effort to help herself or anybody else. I suppose she will just sit down and cry till the day of judgment. And her friends have to put up with it all. She is not an encouraging person to live with. She ought to be put in a lunatic asylum. She has no right to be such an intolerable burden of disagreeableness on the friends who are kind enough to take care of her.

She can't help it, she says. It's a story. She can help it. "If all the wrecked submitted to be drowned this world would be a desert," says Margaret Fuller. Who has not had trouble in this life, grievous trouble, heart-breaking trouble, which seemed to him truly the worst trouble anybody ever had in this world? In short, who couldn't turn his eyes into a perpetual watering pot if he wanted to? But everybody doesn't. Most people don't, in truth. Thank heaven! most people are ashamed to make a circus show out of their trouble. Pretty world it would be to live in if they weren't.

No! It is contemptible to wilt down like a cabbage-leaf when trouble comes hot and heavy. Trouble comes hot and heavy to everybody, and when it is narrowed down to the real point, one person has just about as much trouble to endure as another. It is a fact, although hardly anybody believes it. And there is another fact. It is a hobby of mine to believe that the good God planted in every human breast the power to rise above misfortune. And there is no earthly trouble, however great, which a human being cannot put under his feet if he tries. He has but to fill his soul with grim determination, and fight his troubles till they die. That was what men and women were made for, to overcome difficulties. Whining over spilt milk is contemptible, not to speak of its disagreeableness to those who have to listen to the whining. In the beautiful play of "Kerry," the old servant says to his young mistress:

"Be a man, Miss Kate!" ZIG.

LETTER FROM NEW YORK.

DEAR POST—Six weeks ago a great question arose in the minds of all female New Yorkers. For days their peace was disturbed, and for many nights sweet dreams visited not their pillows.

To move, or not move?

Two weeks were necessary to decide the point, and to talk the numerous husbands over. It is strange husbands should be so averse to changing their domiciles on the first of May. It is so much trouble, and so unpleasant, and deucedly expensive, they all urge.

Much they know about it.

Probably none of you ever saw Dick. Dick is my husband—and the best man that ever lived. I'm sure if any of your man-hating correspondents could know him for the saint he is, they would change their opinions materially.

I don't know whether this "moving" epizootic is in the air, or how it comes, but I do know that everything feminine is affected with it more or less every season about the same time. It is evidently a disease, for there is not one woman in this whole city that *likes* to move—and not one that can speak of it without an involuntary "Oh dear!"

I think it was about the middle of March that I was attacked.

I had not considered myself a proper subject, and had taken no precautions against the approach of the insidious enemy.

I saw the dearest little cottage with a mansard roof and a bay window in front, and a piazza off the side, and it was too much for me. A bay window, a mansard and a piazza all for six hundred a year is enough to set any one thinking. Besides this, there was an elegant "wisteria" that trailed over the piazza and ran in festoons about the upper windows, and a grape arbor in the rear of the house, and a row of soft maples in front, and right by the front door was a bill "To Let." For a whole week I meditated in silence. I knew Dick would never hear a word to it, for he had set his foot down emphatically just one year ago that s'help him! he would not move again in *five years*. If any of his household (meaning me) wanted to "tear up" and "*dig out*" and *go somewhere else*, they could do so, for all he cared, but *he* should stay right where he was. He was very decided, but I had seen him so before, and knew the more decided he was, the more likely to do just as I wanted him to.

As I said, I meditated in silence a whole week; then, after dinner one night (I never say anything until after dinner,) I drew on a very long face and remarked that the plumbing about our house was dreadfully out of repair, to which he responded with a grunt. I felt encouraged, and spoke of the front door that would have to be re-grained and varnished. (We get our house at a high rent, and do our own repairs.) That brought forth another grunt. Still more encouraged I proceeded to enumerate the numberless trifles that must necessarily be attended to before we could think of being comfortable. The broken gate, broken windows, broken shutters, kalsomining, all of which failed to elicit anything more than grunts, until I began to count up the probable cost. I wasn't half through that, when Dick jumped up as though some one had stuck a pin into him, and with some kind of an ejaculation that sounded very much like "Confound it!" he seized his hat and went out on the next block to "see a man."

He was gone two hours, but I was up and waiting for him when he returned, and I immediately informed him that I had got it all reckoned up, and the repairs would cost us at least three hundred dollars, and I presumed *more*. I expected him to fly into a passion and make things look "blue" around there, but instead of that he cocked his head over on one side and looked at me in a comical kind of a way, and said:

"You may as well out with it, sis. Come now, where is the house you want to hire!"

I could have hugged him, he was so good to help me out. Every man would not have done as he did; but I said first off that he was a born angel.

So I told him all about it, and enlarged upon the advantages of "a change of base," and, for a wonder, he never made the slightest objection, only said I could do as I pleased, but he should go to a hotel before I commenced "tearing up," and should stay there until I was entirely settled in the new house. So *good of him!* I always did hate to have a man around when there was any dust and confusion. So it was settled, and the next morning when the landlord came in, I told him we had concluded not to stay another year; and then I started off to take the cottage. When I got there *the "Bill" was down*. My heart was *down* too. However I boldly rang the bell and had the satisfaction of being told that the cottage had just been taken, and that the "Bill" had not been down ten minutes. It was a great comfort to know that it had been removed so lately.

I was discouraged at once, but I had made up my mind to "move" and "move" I would if it killed me. For two weeks I walked New York, Harlem, Brooklyn, and Jersey City in quest of a house. But no house could I find in the least desirable. Worn out, and literally tired to death, I at last laid my head on Dick's broad sympathetic bosom and *cried*. I don't often give way to such womanly weakness, but I couldn't help it then. And Dick? Well! he comforted me. He said I ought to have about two weeks more of it, and then perhaps I'd learn to keep quiet, and let well enough alone. And then he lit a cigar and put his feet on the table, and tipped his chair back and gazed at the ceiling, and looked just as happy and contented as could be.

I wanted to tell him how far I had walked, and how my feet ached, and how my head ached, and how I couldn't look any more, but I thought it was too bad to annoy him with it, so I said nothing, but made it all up in my own mind that I would go to the landlord in the morning and tell him we had reconsidered the matter and would take the house another year.

I didn't do it though, for the landlord called on me next morning, and in the blandest manner informed me that the house was let, and he should feel greatly obliged if we could move a week before the first of May, so he could get things "fixed up" for the new tenants. He hadn't "fixed up" anything for us.

I didn't say much, but I went house-hunting again that day. I had made up my mind not to be difficult, so I took the first house I saw. It was not as good as the one we had, the neighborhood was none of the best, and the rent was a hundred dollars a year more. But it couldn't be helped.

Dick never said a word when I told him about it. But one night when he came home and found the stair carpet had been taken up, and the children hadn't had their faces washed all day, he went up to his room, dressed himself with elaborate care, put perfume on his handkerchief, asked the number of the new house, and said I could send his clothes around to the "Grand Central," as he should be there until this "moving" business was finished up. Then he kissed me, for all my hair wasn't brushed, and I had on a big kitchen apron, and went out, and I have not seen him since, and hope I shall not until I get everything all nice. It puts a man out so to have a house upside down.

We packed up everything. Put all the dishes in barrels, with rags and papers between every one, so they should not get broken: put the books, and we've dead loads of them, in boxes; the clothing in trunks and bureaus; took down bedsteads and wardrobes, and had among it all many "moving accidents." We set the mirrors against the wall in the corner, pictures ditto. We had arranged to move on the last day of April. Of course, the man that was to receive a small fortune for transporting our effects disappointed us. I wouldn't have cared if we had not let the fires go out and taken the stoves down—or if we had had any place to sleep. But such things are to be expected. We took our supper and breakfast off the top of a trunk; drank our coffee out of a two quart pail, passing it around as it was wanted. We eat our bread dry and plain, for *two* reasons. We hadn't any knife to spread it with, and we hadn't any butter. Meats and vegetables were likewise missing. The children were cross and hungry and dirty and cold. The grown people were the same. At nine o'clock we piled the matresses in the corner and untied a bundle of bed clothes, and all lay down in as good order as circumstances would admit. We lay crosswise, so as to make a mattress go farther. The only spark of comfort I had was in thinking how nice and comfortable Dick was in his elegant room at the "Grand Central," instead of being crowded in there with us, freezing to death. The next morning we were up early. Of course it rained. There never was a first of May yet that it didn't. The carmen came in good season, but before half the things were out of the house, the furniture belonging to the new tenants began to arrive. As it was raining, they could not stand out in the street waiting for us, so while we carried *out*, they carried *in*, and per consequence all knowledge of menum and tuum came suddenly to an end. Everything got mixed. Everything got *wet* also.

But we moved. I haven't taken an account of stock yet, but I have "gone for" a great many things that I have not found. There are quite a number of unfamiliar articles scattered around here and there, though. Things belonging to the other movers, possibly. Perhaps it will average right. An even exchange is no robbery, and if they have got my best feather bed that I can't find, it is all fair if I've got their best hair mattress. We haven't done much about "settling" yet, but are getting things cleaned up against the carpets get dry. I am nearly tired to death lifting and moving things, and carrying furniture from one end of the house to the other. You never can get any help the first of May. But I guess I shall get through some time. Everything has an end—some things *two*. Darling Dick writes me to take my time and not work too hard, as he is quite comfortable, and as happy as he can expect to be, separated as he is from his heart's idol. Isn't he splendid? OLIVE KING.

THE YEAR'S FIRST VIOLET.

Though tipped with green the woodland nooks,
The snows still patched the deeper dells,
When on, with lingering steps and looks,
We moved to say our last farewells.

At last we reached the place to part;
She oped a little book, and read
A poem of the human heart,
With trembling voice and drooping head.

"Sweet, I am poor," she murmured low;
"This little book is all to me,
Yet with the gift my being's flow
Through all the world will follow thee!"

I kissed the hand that offered it,
I kissed the tender lips that spoke:
When a swift smile her features lit,
And from my side in joy she broke.

Just where the shine and shadow met,
By a small rill that ran close by,
A little lonely violet,
The year's first born, had caught her eye.

The sweetheart of the April dew,
The darling of the bare brown sod,
It oped its pretty eye of blue,
And smiled its gentle praise to God.

She culled and kissed the baby flower,
And clasped it in the volume's fold:
"Oh, love," she whispered, "every hour
You hold this gift, my heart you hold!"

We parted: oceans rolled between,
And years, long years of sad regret;
Yet once again spring tipped with green
Those woodlands, when again we met.

Myriads of violets now were blown,
But from above my heart I drew
The book that held that olden one,
And kissed its lips of faded hue.

She kissed it too; my hand she pressed;
With loving arms my neck she wreathed;
She laid her head upon my breast,
"Though parted long," she softly breathed,

"The year's first flower hath kept its faith!
Though long its hues have ceased to shine;
My love hath been its deathless wraith—
As then, thine own, for ever thine!"

The Great Minnesota Storm.

We make the following interesting extract relating to the Great Snow Storm last winter, from a private letter received from a friend residing in Blue Earth county, Minnesota:—

"The great snow storm was bad enough in Blue Earth county, but far worse thirty or forty miles west of us. Our folks were chopping wood across the river, and W. was hauling; he had one team; the children fortunately came home at noon from school. About two o'clock we noticed that a very black cloud was rising in the west. It rose very rapidly—so that in half an hour, it was dark as twilight. I had been hurrying the children to get in a good supply of wood, and they could hardly believe a storm was coming, it was so warm that the water was dripping off the roof. C. started about two o'clock for the post-office. After the clouds had spread over the sky, the wind began to blow with a roaring, thunder-like sound that startled every one. Papa started for home immediately. W. had just got one stick of wood laid on the sled when they heard the storm coming, he turned right about for home, put the horses in the stable and came home; but he told us afterward, that it was all he could do to reach home, he thought he could not have faced the storm much farther.

"I felt very anxious about C., though it was a very sheltered road that he took through the woods, and the store but a mile off; but about four o'clock he came in exhausted and panting, his face sheeted with ice, and snow driven thick into his hair, eyebrows and lashes. He said he had to clear the snow from his eyes every few minutes coming home. There were very few people who watered their stock during those three days, and many who did not feed their animals till Thursday; but our boys fed everything regularly, and we melted snow and kept the horses and cattle from suffering for want of water. Our stables are near the house, just under the hill, and the shape of the land is such that they could keep the right direction, though they could not see either house or stables till they were right close to them. We could not see more than three or four feet off, and the storm howled so that you could hear nothing else, any distance away. It has been a terribly hard, cold winter all through—the mercury has disappeared into the bulb of the thermometer more than once this winter. Everybody and everything is weary waiting for the spring."

☞ How difficult it is with the very best intentions for a woman who lives in the world to steer entirely clear of suspicion or misinterpretation, unless there exists between her and her husband a frank and cordial understanding.

APRIL IN THE NORTH.

Once a guardian, grim and gray,
Over a fickle maid had sway,
And ere she had from childhood grown
He rashly sought her to be his own;
So she hushed her dream of a bright-hued dress,
And veiled her dawning loveliness.
He wrapped her close in his frosty arms,
But an icy chill o'erspread her charms.
Color forsook her lips, and song,
And she looked like a ghost the whole day long.
He bore her away to his castle grim,
To a tower stony, and cold and dim;
And he bade his vassals guard her well,
That no strange foot on the threshold fell.

There were costly pearls for his wan young bride,
But she wearily cast them all aside,
There were ermine robes that might please a queen,
But she longed for a mantle and dress of green.
The tears she wept unto ice drops turned.
While not inmost sun for the sunshine yearned.
But the wrath of her lord was a thing to dread,
And he scoffed at the tears her blue eyes shed.

One idle day when her heart beat young,
She sat by the window lorn and sung;—
There fell a sound from the iron frame,
And through a crevice a fairy came,
The sweet south wind, and he kissed her cheek.
'Till the color came, but she dared not speak.
He breathed in her ear a wondrous tale,
How, over the mountain and stream and vale,
A brave young prince with his suite did ride,
In search of a fair one for his bride.
The gifts he brings are a sight to see,
He seeks for you—will fly with me?
Your master is gouty and gray and old,
His days of life are well nigh told,
Your face is fair as an angel's face,
But you pine to death in this dreary place.

"Ah, me, ah, me, if I dared to go!"
And she looked on her thin hand white as snow,
Where winter had placed the *frost-work* cold
That bound her to him for woe or weal;—
"I vowed a vow to this man of years,"
She said, with a sudden gush of tears,—
Then a nervous laugh—and in quick surprise
A rainbow light leapt into her eyes—
A moment more had her lips said yes,
But her face put on its old distress,
For a stormy step was on the stair,
And a muttering breath told who was there.
Caressing her hand in his swift adieu,
The sweet south wind through the casement flew.

Where is the pencil to paint the scene?
The angered lord with his captive queen.
How she wept the while he raved and tore,
Till she fell at his feet on the dungeon floor,
And plead his patience yet once more.
Again alone she child her heart
For acting thus the traitor's part.
And she said, "I will prove to the poor old man
My loyalty as best I can."
But alas! when Southwind called again,
Forgot was her penitential pain;
And she smiled as he whispered in her ear
How the prince himself was drawing near;
Then in sudden passion she broke away,
And flew to the couch where the old lord lay.
Failing and weak his labored breath,
On his withered cheek the hue of death;
She stroked his brow with her small, soft palm,
Till his lids closed down in a slumber calm.
Faithful to one she did not love,
Her tender heart at the last will prove.
Though she hears the sound by his dying bed
Of the prince's heralds riding ahead,
Closed stands the iron door and gate,
But Love will triumph and youth can wait.
And the widowed one by her dead to-day,
Is a destined bride and her new name MAY.

MIRIAM EARL.

HOME AND SOCIETY.

How to Make Ottomans and Chairs.

When spring-time returns to us, there is always much to be done in refurnishing our houses, or in furbishing up the furniture we possess. The greatest charm of a home consists in its individuality—in the expression of the tastes, sentiments and habits of those who own and occupy it.

The greater portion of our housekeepers are usually prevented from the gratification of their own peculiar tastes, excepting in very trifling matters, by the need of resources, *i. e.*, by the shortness of their purses.

Labor is very high throughout the United States, but if our young housekeepers are clever and ingenious, they can perhaps learn to be cabinetmakers, as well as seamstresses and nurses.

By a little exercise of their ingenuity, and the use of hammer, upholsterer's nails, fringes, gimps, stuffings and furniture coverings, or Cretonne-chintz, they can make sewing-chairs, lounges, box-ottomans, and the like, much prettier than any ordinary articles of the same kind which can be purchased.

We go into furniture warehouses and find very beautiful but high-priced articles for adorning our rooms, yet many of them lack the *desideratum* of comfort. They are handsome to look at, of a stylish shape, etc., but frequently for everyday home use they are found wanting.

Now let us see what we can do toward making some comfortable articles for our sitting-rooms, and even for the parlors.

We will first attempt some box-ottomans, and will go to the grocers to find the boxes which will just suit us. Perhaps we should like a couple of them to stand on each side of the bay-window in our cosey sitting-room. That same bay-window is filled up with brightly-blooming plants, by having shelves fitted to each side of the three window-sashes which form it; and some day we will tell you about its arrangement. But now we will learn how to make the boxes.

I think we will make them, both, to open, and keep one for father's newspapers and pamphlets, and one for our own belongings. So the first thing to be done is to line the top, bottom and sides of the inside of the box with glazed cambric of some dark color, using tin tacks to fasten the calico at the corners and on the sides.

Next we must make a cushion for the top. For this we can take some very coarse canvas, or calico, and double it up, letting it hang a quarter of a yard over each side of the box, then cut it out, and run up all sides but one. Thus we have a good-sized bag, which must be stuffed to form the cushion.

Of course, feathers will make the best cushion; but if we don't have any pillows to spare for the purpose they are rather expensive articles to purchase, and we must substitute fine-cut hay, or the "*excelsior*," which is made from poplar-wood.

Newspapers cut or torn into the tiniest pieces will also make a decent cushion. Stuff it rather tightly, then sew up the end, and press the stuffing down evenly. If you like to have a tacked cushion, we can take a large packing needle, such as upholsterers use, and thread strong twine into it; double the ends, and pass them once or twice through the cushion, pulling them in tightly, and then tie the ends into a strong knot.

Cut off the twine, and insert the needle at equal distances of six, seven or eight inches all over the cushion, and it will be nicely tacked, and look like a miniature mattress. Nail this cushion firmly to the top of the box which must have been sawed off about three inches below, all around, and strongly fastened to the back side of the box with iron hinges which can be easily obtained at any hardware store.

Take the bottom of the box for the top, and then nail the original top upon the bottom. Of course, all this must be done before it is lined.

When the box is provided with hinges, lined and cushioned, we must proceed to covering it. For this purpose we can select rep, damask, or the like, or Cretonne chintz which is cheaper than any woollen material, and can be removed and washed when needed.

If chintz is used, however, it is not well to tack the cushion, because it cannot be so easily removed; but if woollen rep, etc., measure off a piece large enough to fit on over the top, and wherever there is a tack in the cushion below, sew a flat button to match the covering upon it; when the buttons are on, nail the covering down around the edges, and cover them with a broad furniture gimp or fringe, and large silver or gilt-headed nails to hold it in place.

Cover the sides with kilt plaits of the same material, or else put it around plain. If chintz is used, and not plaited around, it looks better if lined with colored cambric. Fasten it on neatly, and cover the upper edges with the gimp and nails.

Nail the covering on to the bottom, and then paste over it a piece of oilcloth, closely fitted to it. This will make the box move easily on the carpet.

A really handsome ottoman can be made in this manner; and if not needed as a receptacle for papers, work, slippers, and the like, can be made without the hinges.

If all bushel or peck measures can be used instead of boxes, and very pretty round ottomans manufactured from them. With a trifling expenditure of money, and a little of our time, we have made articles of furniture that will be of great utility.

Now let us turn our attention to making a comfortable sewing-chair out of a decidedly uncomfortable cane-seated chair which we will take from our chamber-set of furniture, and promote to the sitting-room.

The broader the seat, the more comfortable will be our chair; but first, we must have two or three inches sawn off from the back legs, and not quite so much from the fore legs. This must be done to make it low, and give it a slant backwards.

Then we must make cushions to fit the seat, and also the back. Make them as soft and yielding as possible; and if we can procure horse hair or carded wool with which to stuff them, we shall like them much better than "*excelsior*" or hay. Nail the cushions tightly to the seat and back.

Measure your covering to fit the back and sides, making it long enough to touch nearly to the carpet. Do the same to the seat, and put a scantily gathered flounce around it that will join with the back cover, and thus conceal all the woodwork of the chair.

If chintz is used it will wear and hang better if lined with unbleached muslin. Woollen Cretonne would, however, answer our purpose better, because it would not soil so quickly. The edges of the covering and the bottom and top of the flounce can be bound with scarlet, twilled, worsted braid.

When chairs are nicely covered, in this manner, they are not only very comfortable, but are really pretty, and it is a most excellent way in which to use shabby, old chairs which have been banished to the attic. DAISY EYEBRIGHT.

CHARITY.

"Charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.

"Beareth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things."

Charity is placed *first* of all the human virtues, even ahead of *faith* and *hope*; for the reason that one possessed of this crowning glory finds faith, hope, love and all the other attributes of a Heaven-born disposition nestling about his heart like Eden's garden birds.

By charity is not only meant that impulse that leads us to give alms, but a higher virtue—one which enables us to exercise a forgiving spirit toward those who may have injured us, to overlook faults in others, in fact, to look upon the *best* side of every picture, and not search for the blemishes, as we are, alas! too apt to do!

A stranger comes to our neighborhood. We see, directly, that she has lady-like manners, is graceful in appearance. We believe her to be accomplished, and well-educated; but, and we shrug our shoulders in such an insinuating way; *saying* nothing, but *implying* volumes. We *know* no cause for our suspicion; but she came among us unknown, unheralded, a stranger in a strange land; she is shy, courting solitude rather than society, and so we hold ourselves aloof, declaring there must be something wrong about her, and carrying our righteous indignation so far, that if she *does* venture among us, we gather our garments about us, saying by our actions: "I am holier than thou." We repel all her attempts at sociability, and at last drive her from our midst. Then we hold up our hands in holy horror, and exclaim, "I told you so! Something wrong, or she would never *sneak* off so."

Oh! my sisters, why can we not be charitable? Why need we always *imagine* sin? If we would but believe all things pure, until we become convinced to the contrary, how much suffering and anguish and heart-ache and hardness and real wickedness would be avoided.

A kind word costs nothing, and yet is of incalculable value to some poor home-sick, heart-sick, struggling woman. It may save her from ruin. Can we not so far forget our selfishness as to exercise a little of that kind charity which raises us so near the angels? Let us try! and many will rise up and call us blessed. NANNIE.

SLANG TALK BY YOUNG LADIES.

Young ladies have but little idea of the impoliteness and bad effect of the slang phrases often used in so-called polite society. An exchange says, in a word of advice to any who are partially or wholly addicted to it:—

"You have no idea how it sounds to ears unused or averse to it to hear a young lady say, when she is asked if she will go with you to some place, '*Not much!*' or, if requested to do something which she does not wish, to hear her say, '*Can't see it.*'

"Not long ago I heard a young miss who is educated and accomplished, in speaking of a young man, say that she intended to '*go for him!*' And, when her sister asked her assistance at some work, she answered: '*Not for Joe!*'

"Now, young ladies of unexceptional character and really good education fall into this habit, thinking it shows smartness to answer back in slang phrases; and they soon slip flippantly from their tongues with a saucy pertness that is neither ladylike nor becoming. 'I bet,' or 'you bet,' is bad enough among men who are trading horses or land; but the contrast is startling and positively shocking to hear those words issue from the lips of a young lady. They seem at once to surround her with the rougher association of men's daily life, and bring her down from the pedestal of purity to their own coarse level."

Homage to a Singer.

Adelina Patti seems to have excited the Russians, from ruler to rustic, to a pitch of enthusiasm previously unprecedented in the musical history of that nation. At her recent benefit the Emperor Alexander, according to the published reports, went on to the stage, and with his own hands offered the heroine of the evening "a diamond coronet representing wild roses." At the inspiriting sight of the Czar of all the Russias making a present on the public boards to an undoubtedly charming prima donna, the loyal audience rose as one man and applauded with enthusiasm, though what they applauded, whether the emperor or the prima donna, or the homage done by the former to the latter, does not appear. This seems the most extraordinary performance in which royalty has taken part since the day of Louis XIV., who, though he acted and danced on the stage, did so only at court entertainments, where he was more or less among acquaintances.

☞ Repentance begins in the humiliation of the heart, and ends in the reformation of the life.

"I AM A WOMAN."

I am a woman—therefore I may not
Call to him, cry to him,
Fly to him,
Pray him delay not!

And when he comes to me, I must sit quiet:
Still as a stone is,
Harder and colder,
If my heart riot—
Crush and defy it!
Should I grow bolder—
Say one dear thing to him,
All my life fling to him,
Cling to him—
What to atone is
Enough for my sinning!
This were the cost to me,
This were my winning—
That he were lost to me!

Not as a lover at last if he part from me,
Tearing my heart from me—
Hurt beyond cure—
Calm and demure
Then my behaviour;
Showing no sign to him
By look or mien to him,
What he has been to me.
Pity me—O my Saviour!

St. Leger's Love;

OR,

THE SIEGE OF STANWIX.

A Romance of the Revolution.

BY BURR THORNBURY,

AUTHOR OF "RAVENSWOOD," "SKALE, THE SCOUT," "AGNES AYRE," &c.

CHAPTER XIV.

PLANS AND PARTIAL ACTION.

Colonel Sayton and little Gertrude Livingston had indeed, as Captain Hoyt had informed Edith Seymour, been transferred to Fort Stanwix as exchanged prisoners. They had been suddenly and secretly removed from the Hall, and ere the aged officer had time for surmises or expostulations, he found himself and his bewildered little companion within the walls of the stronghold.

Almost the first person he there met was Lieut. Livingston himself. The young officer was standing near the sally-port as the group, of which his sister and the colonel formed two, entered during a temporary cessation of hostilities. He instantly recognized the tall, venerable and still martial figure of his friend. Lionel sprang to give him welcome, not for a moment seeing the glad-faced little creature at his side.

"Colonel Sayton!" he cried, amazed, delighted, and then quickly apprehensive, as he thought of what sad news might be brought. "And Gertie!" he next exclaimed in double joy, catching sight of the face of his darling sister, and giving her kiss after kiss of rapturous greeting. He grasped the colonel's hand, too glad, too fearful to speak. The old man well understood the mute, questioning look he met, and said:

"The others—I left them well in person."

"Oh, Heaven be thanked!" ejaculated Lionel. "You have seen them then?"

"Yes," answered Colonel Sayton, though his face was grave. "They—your mother and Miss Seymour—are prisoners at the Hall, which as you know is occupied by the enemy."

"Yes, yes; but they are alive, and for the present safe. To be assured that they still live is much, very much, though they are helpless in the hostile camp."

As Lionel was not on duty just then, Colonel Sayton at once had a long conversation with him, the subject of which can readily be imagined by the reader.

Colonel Sayton withheld nothing from the lieutenant, thinking it best that the full nature of the danger which threatened both Edith and Mrs. Livingston should be understood, however trying the knowledge must be to him.

The distress and agony of the young man need not be told. There was but one idea to be entertained—rescue; rescue at every hazard. After seeing that the colonel and little Gertrude were provided with as safe and comfortable quarters as the condition of things made possible, he sought Dyke Kopinall. He found him cleaning his rifle.

"Dyke," he said, simply, "I have just heard that my mother and Miss Seymour are yet unharmed, though menaced with cruel danger. You can imagine their situation, two such as they in the hands of infamous men. I intend, though I die in the attempt, to endeavor to rescue them. Will you help me?"

"Will I help you!" cried the generous ranger, as if he thought the question quite unnecessary. "Of course I will; and if I lose more blood in the work than I have ever had drawn from me before, I won't begrudge a drop of it. It will be a desperate thing to venture into St. Leger's camp; but with every Indian of the Six Nations with him, I would do it. The only thing is to get Gansevoort's consent to let us out. Do you think he will give us a chance to risk our scalps in this private way?"

"I think so, Dyke," replied Lionel, thoughtfully. "I understand he wants to get two or three men through the lines to Schuyler, to inform him of our condition. For unless we get outside aid there's not much prospect of our holding out till the end of the month. Colonel Willett has volunteered to attempt the passage, it is said. A dark night will be chosen, and we can leave the fort at the same time, perhaps."

"What is your plan, lieutenant?"

"Nothing as yet. In fact I leave that part to you."

The scout nodded in a satisfied way, as if he thought exceedingly well of such a wise conclusion; and Dyke Kopinall, matchless ranger and famous Indian fighter as he was, might well be pardoned a little self-complacency in connection with such a matter. If any one could contrive a success-promising plan for the liberation of the prisoners it was he.

"The first thing to be done," said the scout, after a brief period of thought, "is to get two or three of our friends into the enemy's camp as assistants. It would be best for them to go openly—as deserters. Of course it won't do for you to try that, lieutenant; nor myself, for we're both known to many of the tories, and no amount of swearing could make them believe we've got tired and turned over."

Dyke paused a moment in reflection, and then asked suddenly:

"Catherine Coot is a prisoner at the Hall, is she not?"

"Catherine Coot!" ejaculated Lionel, in amazement. "She may be there, but what possible service can she perform for us? You might as well expect a cow to help."

"Cow or *cow*ard, whatever she be," returned the ranger, quietly, "I think I can make use of her. Are you sure she is there?"

"Wouter Van Clooker, you know, left her at the Hall. Colonel Sayton can probably inform us whether she is there still."

"I should like to know," said Dyke.

"Remain here awhile. I will see the colonel."

And wondering in what way the scout thought to make use of Catherine Coot in the perilous work before them, yet fully satisfied that he had conceived a plan whereby the girl was to be made a voluntary or involuntary ally, the lieutenant departed at once to obtain the desired information.

He returned shortly, saying that Miss Coot was still at the Hall, and, in view of the fact that everybody regarded her as a fool, was not considered as of any particular account, except to be teased and frightened.

"Good!" exclaimed Dyke Kopinall. "And now, lieutenant, if you please, I would like you to see Colonel Gansevoort, and get permission of him to carry out a little plan I have formed. We shall want at least two men besides ourselves—Jack Clavers and Peter Coot I would mention."

"Peter is a cousin of Catherine, I believe?"

"Yes; and they look enough alike to be brother and sister. But there's this difference between 'em—she's a fool and he aint."

"A plain distinction," remarked the young officer, with a half-smile.

"And now I'll see the commander if possible."

"Ask him if he's willing that two or three of his men should desert," said Dyke with an expressive wink and a twinkle in his great gray eyes. "They could tell stretchy stories of the strength of old Stanwix, you know, the number and spirit of the men, the quantity of provisions on hand, and all that."

"I understand."

"We might do the cause a good service as well as our friends."

"Yes; but if these pretended deserters," said Lionel doubtfully, "are to paint such a bright picture of the situation of the garrison, some of the enemy may be sharp enough to ask why they left, if Gansevoort is to win."

"Trust Jack Clavers and Peter Coot to shut up the enemy's eyes on that point. They'll have some pretty plausible tale to tell—something about the king winning at last, about their being tired of the war, tired of being shut up in this hot old hole, mad at Gansevoort, and a dozen other things."

The face of Lionel brightened. He began to feel that his friend would indeed find a way through all the difficulties and dangers that lay between them and the rescue of his mother and his betrothed; but such was his anxiety and impatience that, until reassured by the confident assertions of the ranger, the obstacles to be overcome seemed insurmountable. Not that his determination had been in any degree lessened by such considerations, for death itself would be preferable to idle endurance of the apprehensions that harassed him. Even in the excitement of the siege he could not for a moment forget his solicitude for the imperilled ones, and longed to exchange the comparative inactivity of the defence for the dubious and dangerous task of their rescue.

"I will see Colonel Gansevoort, Dyke," he said, "and I think I can easily prevail upon him to give us permission to make the effort we desire."

"Tell him, even if we fail, that there will be a few less of St. Leger's men to fight; for we will not *give* our lives away."

Leaving the ranger to finish cleaning his rifle, foul with repeated firing, the young man sought the quarters of the commandant, and with little delay obtained audience. The colonel not only expressed the warmest sympathy for Mrs. Livingston and Miss Seymour, but granted Lionel discretionary power to choose and organize a band of rangers, if so many were needed for special service in behalf of the captives.

Hastening back to Kopinall, he joyfully informed him of the colonel's kindness and approbation of any plan that might be devised to achieve the object in view.

"Did you mention my suggestion in regard to the deserters?" inquired the scout.

"Yes; and it was warmly approved of. In fact that game was about to be tried anyhow."

"Good. To-morrow at early dawn will be the time. And now I must see Jack Clavers and Peter Coot."

The ranger sought these men, and after acquainting them with his purpose, asked their co-operation. It was given instantly and eagerly. A long consultation followed, Kopinall sketching the plan he had already in his own mind formed, and the others offering amendments and suggestions until a satisfactory scheme was arranged.

The night passed. Just as the light of morning became sufficient to permit objects to be plainly distinguished, two men jumped from the parapets of Fort Stanwix and ran rapidly in the direction of the besieger's lines. They were Jack Clavers and Peter Coot. The whole garrison had been apprised of what was about to transpire, and had received instructions how to act. The pretended deserters had gone but a few rods before a sentinel challenged them. The only answer was for each to pull from his pocket a piece of white cloth, wave it toward the enemy—by whom also they were now discovered—and make more rapidly than ever toward St. Leger's camp.

"Halt!" thundered the sentry.

The two men answered with a yell of defiance. The sharp crack of a rifle followed, but the discharge was harmless, for the weapon had contained no ball. A hundred musket-shots succeeded the report of the sentry's gun, but still the flying rangers were untouched; and no wonder, for, like the first, every cartridge was blank. Another harmless discharge, and the men were safe? The enemy received them with open arms, thinking they were of course deserters.

"Mighty close shootin' that!" exclaimed Jack Clavers, rubbing his head and pretending that a bullet had passed through his hair; "but we dodged 'em neat."

"Dank Got!" cried Peter in the same breathless tone of rejoicing at his narrow "escape." "We're ton with tat tam blace. How is you, frents? You won't be hardt on us shust pecause we couldn't leafe ter repels sooner, I hopes?"

"Not at all," said an officer who was near. "You're safe and welcome; and you ought to be very glad you are out of yonder fort. It will be bad for those who are left when *we* get in. But come with me to my quarters. I should like to examine you a little in regard to Gansevoort's ability to hold out another week. The commandant will see you also."

"Yes, yes," said Peter as they went along. "Put I must tell ter blain druth. Gansevoort *is* a tam fool, but ish a stupporn mans, and will make you blenty of drubble yet."

"You don't think that he is able to hold the fort much longer, do you?" asked the officer in some surprise.

"What does you call much longter?" inquired Peter with a good show of ignorance as to the meaning of that term.

"A week—a week or ten days. But come in here before you answer."

The party had reached a large tent, something of the marquee style, and evidently that of one of the superior officers.

"A week or ten tays!" repeated the Dutchman dubiously as they entered. "Well, you see Gansevoort ish a stuppern mans, and he hash blenty of bowder and blenty of brovishuns, and a good menty men—"

"What is the present strength of the garrison?"

Peter gave a total of nearly double the real force.

"Is it possible!" exclaimed his questioner, rather dejectedly. "But perhaps you are lying?" he added sternly, with a warning flash of his eyes.

"If I am," said the pretended deserter gravely, "you findts me out. Ten I lose mine bet."

"That is very true. Your fat face would soon be redder than it is—with your blood, you understand."

Peter Coot, like his cousin Catherine, was abundantly supplied with covering for his bones, and even the midsummer heats did not much reduce his usual weight; but he did something besides perspire for all that. His broad, blooming face, smooth as a girl's, was hardly cooling to look upon, and he reminded all who knew both, of the greasy, garrulous Catherine herself. But he was shrewd, brave, and eminently useful, as his cousin certainly was not. His age was not above twenty; his form was short, giving him when he moved an appearance of *rolling* as much as walking, and, in this particular, increasing his resemblance to Miss Coot, who was always rolling her dumpy self about, as much in the way as possible. Peter's personal appearance was against him, it must be confessed, but those who knew him best agreed that a more reliable, courageous and sensible fellow was not to be found. Dyke Kopinall, knowing his qualities of shrewdness and daring, had wisely chosen him as an assistant on the present occasion. And Peter had been instructed to act a difficult part.

Jack Clavers had been silent up to this point, but the officer now turned to him, saying:

"Do you risk your head also in affirming that what your companion has said is true?"

"You may have every drop of red that's in me if it ain't," responded Jack, quickly and emphatically.

"Then why were you so almighty anxious to get help from Herkimer?"

"Herkimer be hanged!" returned the scout, contemptuously. "Gansevoort wasn't half as anxious as you thought. He's enough men already. He was hopin' and prayin' you would try to carry the fort by storm, and wanted to make out his force as little as possible to coax you on. He hoped the Injuns would get such a bloody beatin' that they'd not feel like tryin' again. You know *they* want to do the thing quick, or else they get impatient and discouraged."

"Yes," said the Briton almost inaudibly, thinking of the discontent and insubordination that he knew prevailed already. "Gansevoort wished to trap us, then?"

"And does still. He knows a bloody beat back would be just what Brant couldn't get his warriors to stomach. The siege would than have to be carried on by the whites alone; the Injuns would scatter and go to private plunderin'."

"Too true, too true," murmured the Englishman to himself. Jack Clavers chuckled secretly as he saw how he had deceived the officer, for the very thing that Colonel Gansevoort *most* feared was a determined assault, for the garrison were not strong enough to make a repulse of the enemy a sure thing. Otherwise, it would have been as Jack Clavers declared.

After a further cross-examination, the officer informed the two men that they would be taken to the Hall, where St. Leger had lately established his headquarters, and by whom they would be more closely questioned.

"To the Hall!" was the secret and joyful ejaculation of both. "We are going straight to the prisoners at once!"

Alas! to one of them only, for Edith was no longer there.

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH CATHERINE COOT FIGURES AGAIN.

Catherine Coot, since her capture at Seymour Hall, had not been confined there, but soon after the surrender had been removed to quarters not distant, which had been provided for non-combatant prisoners—women, children and a few disabled men. She had been permitted to visit the Hall, however; or rather her going there had not been interfered with; and thus it was that Colonel Sayton, seeing her there occasionally, had concluded that she was one of the regular inmates. He had not questioned her, for he desired to have as little to do with her as possible, well-knowing that a word of sympathy or notice would have subjected him to an inundation of reply. He regarded her as an incorrigible dunce, pitying her at the same time, and fearing that she might be made the victim of insult and wrong by the rude soldiery—as she was already the victim of perpetual teasing—yet knowing that he was powerless to help her.

Catherine, since her first elation in consequence of escaping massacre, after the surrender of the Hall, had been in rather a dejected state of mind. She had not yet seen her "Apraham," who, as she had been assured, was a prisoner as well as herself. The liveliest solicitude that she was capable of feeling had reigned in her breast on her lover's account. She could obtain no information of his whereabouts, though her inquiries were free and persistent. One would assure her that Abraham was dead; another that he had turned tory and joined the Johnson Greens; a third that he had been exchanged; so that the devoted girl was in the most bewildered condition of ignorance possible. She inclined to take the most melancholy view of the matter, and had almost given up the hope of ever seeing the youth again. The facts, if known, would have relieved her immensely; for Abraham with his captured ox-team had only been kept mercilessly at work, drawing wood, water and other supplies for the besiegers. His place of labor was remote from that portion of the camp in which the prisoners were confined, and thus it was that the two had not met.

But at the very hour—nay, almost the very moment—of the approach of Jack Clavers and his comrade to the Hall, it happened that kind destiny directed the footsteps of Abraham and his oxen to that quarter also. He had been ordered to the river to draw up some heavy logs, and he passed directly in front of the once grand but now ruined mansion. Catherine Coot had gone over to the Hall early that morning on a private mission, which was nothing more nor less than to secure for her dinner a promising cabbage-head, whose tender growth in the Hall garden she had jealously watched. Despite her grief and dejection, her fondness for that delectable vegetable had not been greatly lessened. Only with life would it depart.

Abraham came up, loudly whistling and calling to his oxen alternately, just as his sweetheart, whom he supposed was at the fort, stole from the garden with her prize concealed under her apron.

She heard that well-known whistle, pitched in a key a little less joyous than in more peaceful times perhaps—that familiar call of "gee" and "haw"—the pistol-like crack of the whip—and she started forward with a great, gasping cry of surprise and joy.

"Oh, good Lordt!" she next exclaimed, using her favorite and somewhat profane expletive. "Can tat be Apraham—my Apraham?"

She emerged from the shrubbery and obtained a full view of the scene.

She came near swooning with delight as she once more beheld her lover's blooming face—the spotted oxen, and the old familiar cart to which they were attached.

"Apraham! Apraham!" she shouted, dropping her vegetable and rushing forward like a tornado.

"Whoa! whoa!" commanded he, stopping his team and giving an involuntary jerk of the head, as if his heart had bounded to his throat in response to that rapturous call. He recognized his darling Catherine, and what were oxen, redcoats, redskins, tories and rebellions to him then? Over his broad, ruddy face broke a light like that of the morning itself.

"Oh, my leetle gal!" he cried, opening his arms to receive the approaching form of his betrothed. The momentum was fearful, but it seemed to expend itself in a tremendous kiss, for the lips of the two met with a precision and force wholly unexampled. After repeated embraces came ejaculations of delight and questions whose only answers were other questions.

"I pegun to peliefe you was ted, Apraham," said Catherine, "and you ton't know how pad I felt. Oh, goot Lordt! Where tid ter tories or ter Pritish geep you?"

"Where was *you*, my leetle gal?"

Abraham was addicted to the use of this term rather as one of endearment than of fact it is presumed.

"Are you a brisoner, Apraham? or ish you shust a triver of ter deam?"

"You tells me apout yourself first, my Gatherine? Why tid you not go to ter fort?"

"Why tid not *you?* Oh, good Lordt! such dimes! Put it is not so pad as I dinks it to pe—pein a prisoner. Only *you* was not alongt."

"Forward there, you bumpkin!" at this moment thundered a voice not far away. "Hurry up your oxen or I'll call a Mohawk to scalp you."

This terrible threat necessitated an immediate parting of the lovers, for Abraham stood greatly in terror of the Indians—the mere mention of the Mohawk name being sufficient to cause him to tremble and grow pale. He glanced lugubriously at Catherine, with an unspoken good-bye in his looks, and then gathered up his whip without trusting himself to further parting demonstrations.

"Gee, Bright! Whup, ho!" he called, as bravely as he could, but with a sadness in the cry notwithstanding.

"Goot py, Apraham," cried Catherine as the slow team moved off. "Pe a goot poy, and ter Pritishers won't let ter Injuns hurt you."

She stood mournfully watching the departing teamster, unmindful of the approach of the party conducting Jack Clavers and her Cousin Peter to the Hall, until an exclamation from the latter caused her to turn toward the new-comers. The shadows disappeared from her doleful visage in an instant.

"Why, Cousin Beter, ish tat you! Good Lordt! all my friendts are comin'. I'm glatt I am a brisoner, and not at ter fort."

Beyond his first exclamation of recognition—which had escaped him rather involuntarily—Peter Coot did not attend much notice to the girl, as he did not wish to attract the particular attention of the officer present to the fact of his acquaintance with her. He merely smiled, and the party passed on to the Hall. Catherine, feeling now as if she were among friends, hurried back to the prisoners' quarters, eager to relate that she had seen both "Apraham and Cousin Beter."

The examination of the pretended deserters before St. Leger was substantially the same as that they had already been subjected to. Both told a plausible story and were careful not to contradict themselves. The result was that the British colonel admitted them as volunteers to the ranks of his regular troops, and they were placed on duty at once. This was what they had expected and also desired, provided they were not too rigidly held to service. But St. Leger's force was made up of complex material and the discipline was not very strict, except as related to his own regulars. The Indians were not amenable to any but their chiefs, and the tories loved predatory warfare best, with its consequent looseness of organization. Thus it was that the two rangers found themselves, while enrolled as loyalist soldiers, in the enjoyment of considerable liberty to pursue their private object.

They made speedy and excellent use of their opportunities. Peter managed to get himself placed on duty as one of the number engaged in guarding that portion of the camp in which the prisoners were confined. He was thus enabled to hold communication with Catherine Coot, and from her learned the situation of affairs at the Hall. To his dismay he was informed that Edith Seymour was no longer there, but had been removed, no one knew whither.

"Do you know tat ish te truth?" he demanded.

"Yesh, Cousin Beter; Miss Edith ish not tere."

"Ish to other laty?"

"Mrs. Lifingston?"

"Yesh."

"Why you want to know?"

"None of your pishness. Tell me ter truth and pe cifil. I'm turned tory now, and say what I blease. Ish to laty there?"

"She ish Cousin Beter; you neetn't look so mad."

"Tell me all I ask yer ten, and tell ter truth."

And Peter pursued his inquiries until he had assured himself of Mrs. Livingston's presence at the Hall, and the exact locality of her confinement,

"Catherine," he then said, "I wants to see you here again this afening. You mindts now; I will pe on guard, and I want to see you pad. Tey lets you run apout bretty much as you blese, ton't tey?—pein of no account."

Catherine resented this imputation slightly, but promised to be on hand at the appointed hour.

Peter at the first opportunity hastened to Jack Clavers and informed him of what the girl had said respecting Edith.

"The lieutenant should know at once," said Jack.

"But it won't do for either of us to slip back; besides, there is hardly time—he would be gone before it could be done. We will attend to Mrs. Livingston first. You think you can get her from the Hall, do you, Peter?"

"If that pig Catherine will do what I wants her to," returned he.

"Well, then we will get the elder lady out of St. Leger's clutches first, and look for the younger one afterward."

After making some necessary minor arrangements, the two men separated.

Peter Coot, on guard that evening, was gratified to find Catherine faithful to her promise. He had a request to make of her, which after many expressions of wonder she complied with. It was nothing more or less than, first, the loan of the dress she wore—she of course first obtaining a garment of one of her fellow prisoners—and, secondly, the contribution of another gown and bonnet by whomsoever of the females who could be induced to dispense with the articles.

"What ish Cousin Beter up to now, I wonder?" was her incessant mental query after finding she could get no satisfaction from him. But she acted as agent in the matter of procuring the garments, yielding her own dress readily, and having little difficulty in inducing another of the women to furnish the second. Clothing was none too plenty among the plundered creatures; but without demur or questioning, the intelligent matron to whom Peter had directed Catherine to apply, gave up her gown and bonnet, contenting herself with tattered ones in their place.

An hour passed, and Peter was relieved as guard.

Another went by. Mrs. Livingston sat in her chamber, wondering sadly as to the fate of her friends. A light knock was heard at the door. It startled her, for it was late for visitor or messenger to come. She arose as she heard that light tap, her breath hushed painfully, and went toward the entrance. When she reached the door she did not hesitate to withdraw the bolt, for an instinct seemed to inform her that a friend was near.

As the lamplight streamed outward, it revealed the broad face and heavy figure, as she supposed, of Catherine Coot.

"Why, Catherine!" she exclaimed. "What brings you here at this hour? But come in; I am glad to see you."

And glad she was, though she experienced a sense of disappointment after that sudden, instinctive thrill of hope.

"I pegs your parton, my laty," said the visitor, entering. "Do not pe alarmt when you findts—"

The voice was not exactly that of the supposed Catherine. Mrs. Livingston came near interrupting the apologetic intruder with an exclamation of terror, but a kindly smile on the face of the speaker reassured her.

The coarse bonnet was thrown aside; and, not Catherine Coot but her cousin, Peter, attired in gown and apron, stood before the astonished woman.

"Peter, Peter, is it you?" she cried, in joyful tones of recognition.

"Not too lont, my lady. Ter guardt may hear, and ten I lose not only my ponnet, but mine headt."

"This is perilous, Peter. Why do you come?"

"To serve you, my laty," said he, simply.

"God bless you, my good friend. You are kind to think of me, even if you cannot aid me. How long have you been in the camp.

"Only a leetle while."

"Were you taken prisoner?"

"No, my laty; I'm shust a deserter, you understants," he answered, meaningly.

"You come from the fort, then?" she asked, breathlessly.

"Yesh; and from your poy—a goot young man's he."

"He is alive then? Oh, Heaven be praised."

"He is alife; alife and well; and he sents us to help you, and—and—"

"Miss Seymour? Alas, she is gone."

"I knows it; Catherine tells me; but we findts her yet—when *you* is safe, my laty."

"I fear that you cannot help me, Peter," said Mrs. Livingston, sadly. "I am closely guarded—none of the prisoners but Catherine has been permitted to see me since Edith was removed. Except yourself, Peter," she added, with a smile; "and you have borne your disguise well, or you would have been detected. How comical you look; with your bonnet on, Catherine herself would hardly know which is which."

"*I* knows and you knows; tat ish enough. Now, how can I help you, my laty? Will *dese* pe of any goot?"

He drew from the folds of his over-garment a roll, which, when opened, proved to consist of a coarse "linsey-woolsey" dress, similar to that worn by Miss Coot. A large "sun-bonnet" was next displayed, of such liberal pattern that when on the head it would afford great concealment to the wearer's features.

Mrs. Livingston at once comprehended Peter's plan. It was for her to pass from the Hall as one of the servants who were still permitted to attend her.

"You tarken your face—it pe mootch too fair—with tle—" he placed in her hand a preparation of brown pigment—"you fly your hair a leetle—you geep hitten your too small handts—and ten who knows you in te efening from one of ter common womants? eh?"

"I understand you, my good fellow," she said, gratefully, and with a tremble of hope. "You are deserving of my eternal gratitude for your courage in coming in this well-conceived disguise to give me an opportunity of escape, but, even if I can leave the Hall, how am I to make my way from the camp? You overlook that difficulty."

"Not at all, my laty. Ter gamp is not mootch guardted in ter rear—tey fears no attack at enty boint put ter front, you knows. Half ter brisoners could run away if tey choose, only tey pe too afraidt to dry. You knows ter roadt from tis blace to ter forks?"

"Very well indeed, Peter," sighed Mrs. Livingston, thinking of the last time she had passed over it.

"Well, ten to-morrow night you goes and hidets by ter Taree Oaks—you knows ter blace?"

"Yes, yes."

"And waits until two Injants come—"

"Two Indians, Peter?"

"And you pe not afraidt, pecause—"

"You terrify me, Peter."

"Pecause," resumed the Dutchman, smiling, "pecause *one* pe your own poy, turned Mohawk, and ter other Tyke Kopinall—him you knows."

"Oh, Peter! I comprehend. They are to meet me there and conduct me further."

"Tat is ter blan," softly cried the delighted fellow, looking more like his Cousin Catherine than ever, as he threw the huge bonnet on his head and gave a sweep of his linsey skirts. "You must get to them alone," he continued, "for Beter must stay behind. Eight ish ter hour—to-morrow night."

"But you will endeavor to escape at the same time, will you not? You may be suspected of assisting me, and suffer on my account."

"I cannot go, my laty. Jack Clavers ish with me, and when we gets you off, we still have a bart to blay. We comes and tells pig stories of Gansevoort, and to runt away would spoil tem all."

"You are a noble fellow, Peter, and serve your country well. You have taken upon yourself the dangerous part of representing the garrison's strength as much greater than it is, that the enemy may become discouraged and abandon the siege. What if the fort falls soon, and you are proved an agent of its commander?"

"I dinks of all tat, my lady. Put ter fort will *not* fall soont. If Schuyler helps tem, not at all."

"There *is* a prospect of holding out then?"

The question was with an earnestness that startled the scout. The emotion of the lady, great as it might naturally be supposed to be, caused him to glance more keenly at her. Her face was deathly pale, and she trembled fearfully.

"Yesh," he said, in answer to her question; and then it occurred to him that it was her little daughter of whom she thought with such strange excitement. So he said with intent to calm her—

"You fears for your leetle one; you dinks of her if Stanwix falls and Brant leads his warriors to ter work he has ton perfore? Pe not so mooch alarmt, my laty."

"I think of her, Peter, with sad foreboding it is true, but I think of more. You are acting a part, and so am I—each for our country's sake. You do not understand me, and I cannot explain—but I tell you that my aid is worth a thousand men to Gansevoort."

Peter stared at this announcement, in questionless wonder.

"It is as I say," continued the noble woman. "And yet you promise me escape—show me how I can reach the arms of my son. If I knew the siege was about to be abandoned, I would take this disguise and endeavor to leave this hated prison. But as it is, I will serve my country, though I sacrifice myself. Go from me now, my brave friend, nor think of me until St. Leger orders retreat from yonder well-defended walls. *Then*—if that time should come—I will need and accept you aid."

Peter felt a sense of mystery stealing over him. He was not obtuse, but he little guessed the meaning of what he had heard.

"You knows pest," he said simply and unquestioningly. "Put what will *tey* dink if you comes not at ter hour?"

"Cannot *you* meet them, Peter? Tell them I am safe at present, but that Edith is gone. Ask them to search for her, and leave me for awhile. I fear I could not, even under their guidance and protection, make my way from this wild camp. The Indians roam everywhere, and would cross our path. Say that I think, although I do not know, that Edith is not in the camp, but has been taken by Captain Hoyt up the river—perhaps to his own home. Say all this, Peter, and tell Lionel that I bless him, as I hope God will bless us all. And now you must go; your absence may be noted. I pray that you be permitted to go safely out, for the peril is great. You may leave the disguise you brought me, for it may serve me yet. Good-night."

She placed her soft white hand in the brown one of the gallant Dutchman, pressing it with grateful fervor, and bidding him be very careful. The scene was ludicrous as related to the disguised scout, but never was a more serious tableaux enacted.

Peter, with a worshipful admiration of the beautiful woman, rather awkwardly took his departure, not forgetting, however, to remember what character he had assumed.

He went softly down the dimly lighted stairway, and Mrs. Livingston, hearing no challenge or outcry, rejoiced to think that he had passed the guard without hindrance.

The thunder of the heavy guns had ceased. She arose and gazed from her window out upon the stilly night. The camp-fires, burning low, spotted the darkened earth. Above, from a mellow sky, shone the steadier, inextinguishable lights of Heaven.

"God give me strength," she prayed, "to act my further part."

CHAPTER XVI.

FINDS A FRIEND, BUT!—

It is time our narrative returned to Edith Seymour. We find her, still a prisoner, in a lonely house some distance up the Mohawk—the residence of Captain Wellmore Hoyt in fact—whither she had been conveyed by that unscrupulous individual, for reasons of his own. The first of these was a fear that the beauty and defenceless condition of Edith, might win upon the hearts of some of the more chivalrous of his fellow officers to the extent of raising her up a champion, perhaps a lover, who would become his rival. Captain Hoyt well knew the susceptibility of the soldier heart to the charms of such a rare presence as Edith's.

The second and controlling motive of his action, was a desire and a determination to make his lovely captive his wife, for he knew not how soon the fortune of war might separate him from her. Wed her he would, if but in form, though he did not despair of winning from the distressed girl a sad consent to become his bride.

"Why will she not accept my hand, and with it peace, security and a royalist's hold upon her estates, now threatened with confiscation? She pretends to love that young Livingston, but why can I not be as much to her as he? A 'tory' captain is as good as a rebel lieutenant any day."

Such were his complacent, conceited musings; and his conclusions seemed to him well drawn, because he judged her by the low standard of self. He took not into account the determined will, the devoted love, the soul-born patriotism, the lofty reliance, and the proud disdain of wrong that marked the character of his intended victim. He only thought that she was a woman, and therefore weak; that she was tempted, and would yield.

Again and again he had urged her to accept his hand. He had pleaded, threatened and assumed, but she remained unyielding still.

"You *shall* marry me," he had said as he last left her. "To-morrow evening the ceremony shall be performed. Be ready, for I will bring one to do the work, and he will count the groom's desire as more than the bride's reluctance. You understand; all's fair in love and war, especially when one is engaged in both."

Edith had not replied, but had sunk down, crushed, despondent and with a feeling of utter helplessness. She knew that a mockery of marriage would be performed, and she would be called the wife of Wellmore Hoyt.

"How can I escape this ignominy—this wrong?" she had asked herself again and again, in frenzied unrest, as the hours of the afternoon preceding that dreaded evening wore away.

There seemed to be no one to appeal to, unless it was the sister of the tory captain, who was present and had appeared to sympathize with her, though few words of commiseration had been spoken.

But a touch, a tone, a glance reveals one true soul to another, and Edith felt that Lydia Hoyt would never lend herself to unholy work, nor stand a silent witness of iniquity.

Toward dusk Lydia came into the room where the persecuted girl was confined. She went closely to Edith's side, took the fair hand of the latter in her own, and whispered, without preface:

"I know your situation, Miss Seymour, and the wrong that is meditated against you. I have been silent until now, for I did not wish the others to suspect I am your friend. But my brother shall not succeed in his evil purpose."

Edith was overcome by this abrupt and unexpected offer of assistance.

"I have one friend, then," she said, with tearful gratitude. "I thought your face looked kind, but I feared that you were against me notwithstanding. Do you think—do you think that your brother will persist in this dreadful thing?"

"He certainly will, I am sad to say, unless he is thwarted. That I will do to the extent of giving you your liberty—I can do no more."

"Do you mean," asked Edith, tremblingly, "that you will release me from this house?"

"Yes; by the practice of a little deception I can do that; but it would only be to direct you to other dangers."

"If I can only escape this present peril I shall be so grateful," said Edith, earnestly.

"Well then," said Lydia, decisively, "the venture shall be made. There is a small boat concealed on the river shore, just opposite the head of Ripple Isle—you know the spot?"

"Yes, yes."

"If you can reach it unobserved, you can push off on the rain-swollen stream, and float unseen, I think—the craft is such a small one—past the British sentinels, and by morning reach one of the friendly forts below."

"But how can I get from the house?"

"You shall go as *Lydia Hoyt*, and it is quite time for us to exchange dresses. My brother will be here soon, but you must be gone before his arrival."

"What will be the consequence to you of this generous act?" asked Edith, fearing that her benefactor would suffer for giving such aid and comfort.

"Do not be concerned for me. Well-

more will be furious, but I shall rather enjoy his rage if you only escape. Let me assist you to disrobe. You are giving a good gown for a poor one, but it is the best I can do. The war has stripped us sorely, and we have to take what's left."

"I can give you nothing but my better garments and my gratitude in exchange for this great service," said Edith with a half-smile, and yet very feelingly. "I trust the fit will not be a bad one; our figures are not unlike."

Miss Hoyt was of smaller person than Edith, but when each was attired in the dress of the other no great inconvenience was caused by the difference in size.

"Take my bonnet now," said Lydia, handing her that article, "for it is about time you were going. The rear door of the hall is unfastened, and you can pass that way to the garden and thence to the field beyond. There is a fellow in the hall whose special business is to watch you, but by averting your face and passing quickly he will not suspect it is other than I going out. Go now, and Heaven help you."

Edith's heart was too full to speak. She kissed the lips of her friend, and then, opening the door, she stepped out, turning as she did so and making a pretence of assuring herself that the latch was properly fastened, so that she could avoid the eyes of the guard. She did not once glance toward him, but, still keeping her face averted, went directly to the rear door and out into the garden. She drew a breath of relief as this first successful movement was made, and more confidently hastened on.

A path led directly from the door across the wide garden to a field beyond. A gate gave her entrance to this latter, and, closing it softly, she struck out in the gathering gloom for the river. There was but this single field to cross, and she would reach the shore.

How her heart beat! She knew that dangers were around her as thickly as ever, for the hostile camp was not far distant; and savage foes might at any moment discover her. But she had escaped, for the time at least, from Wellmore Hoyt, and she felt thankful and hopeful. The sensation of freedom was a delightful one in itself—it seemed so long since she had been permitted to enjoy it. The restraints, first of illness and then of her captivity, had worn upon her until the buoyant spirits that usually sustained her had in a manner sunk; but with each breath of the open air she felt freshened and invigorated.

It required but a few minutes to enable her to reach the steep bluff that formed the rampart of the field, and lay between her and the water-side. She paused a moment in the deeper shadow of a huge sycamore to gaze up and down the river and assure herself that no enemy had perceived her. On the opposite shore, both above her and below her, shone the light of several fires, and around them she saw plainly the moving forms of men—savages doubtless, who, though the weather was warm, with the Indian's fondness for light and heat had kindled faggot-fires out of mere wantonness.

The spectacle was not an agreeable one, for the river was narrow, and at more than one point the long flickering beams from the burning piles streamed across, luridly illuminating the surface of the water.

"What shall I do?" asked Edith of herself in alarm and perplexity as she beheld this first bar to her further progress. "Must I wait here? The Indians are keen-eyed, and though they apprehend no danger, and therefore keep no watch, I may be discovered. I had better at once seek the boat and be ready to push off. It is my only way to safety."

The girl descended the steep bank and made her way to some bushes just opposite the head of the isle that had been mentioned. In this covert she sought for the boat, and found it without difficulty. The bushes grew close to the water's edge, hanging over it and concealing the little craft, which, already launched, floated under its leafy canopy. It was secured by a small rope, which Edith could quickly cut with a knife Miss Hoyt had given her. She entered the boat and felt for the oars. They lay in the bottom, and the fair girl placed them in position, rejoicing as she did so that she knew how to use them so well. For rowing was one of the accomplishments of our heroine.

After seating herself in the canoe—for such it was—she remained for some minutes debating whether to attempt the descent of the river at once, or to wait until the camp-fires had burned down. For a little distance, should she at once push off, she would be screened from the observation of those on the opposite shore by the intervening isle—a temporary lodgment of driftwood—but, that passed, she must then emerge into the wider channel and expose herself to the danger of discovery.

While thus anxiously considering what course to adopt, she was startled by what she thought was the approach of a stealthy footstep. She listened intently, grasping her knife, yet fearing to cut the rope lest she should thereby betray her presence, when, by remaining quiet, she might hope to escape being seen.

Again that stealthily, approaching step was heard—this time she was not left in doubt. An intruder—an enemy she could but conclude—was stealing near; was entering, oh, horror! the very covert in which she was hidden.

"I am lost!" she thought in silent agony, "but I will make an effort to escape."

With a quick flash-like motion she severed the rope, but before the canoe could float from under the concealing mass of foliage, a dark figure sprang, with the swiftness of a panther's leap, into the shallow stream, caught the little craft by the bow and drew it again to shore.

Edith was too terrified to scream—a horror bound her senses; but in the one appalling moment that was left her of consciousness, she saw that the form before her was not that of a civilized foe but of an Indian warrior. She caught, even in the shadows, a glimpse of the tufted head—the bare shoulders—the belted body, and gave herself up as lost.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A Letter from a Pickpocket.

From the New York Tribune.

We have received the following curious letter, and print it for what it is worth:

To the Editor of the Tribune:

SIR:—Please advise your readers always to leave their names and addresses in their pocket-books. It frequently happens in our business that we come in possession of portmonnaies containing private papers and photographs which we would be glad to return, but we have no means of doing so. It is dangerous to carry them about—so we are forced to destroy them. I remember an instance where I met with serious trouble because I could not make up my mind to destroy a picture of a baby which I had found in the pocket-book of a gentleman which came into my hands in the way of business on the Third avenue road. I had lost a baby myself, the year before, of the same age as this one, and I would have given all I had for such a picture. There was no name in the portmonnaie, and no way of finding out who was the owner, so like a fool I advertised it, and got shadowed for it by the police. Tell your readers to give us a fair show to be decent—and always leave their addresses in their pocket-books. We want to live and let live.

Yours truly, A PICKPOCKET.

The Cost of Conquest.

BY CLEMENTINE MONTAGU.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

NEMESIS.

King.—"Gertrude, do not drink."
Queen.—"I have, my lord: I pray you, pardon me."
King (aside.)—"It is the poisoned cup, it is too late."
* * * * * * *
Hamlet.—"Oh, villainy! Ho! let the door be locked;
Treachery! seek it out."
—*Shakspeare.*

Katherine's last waking thought as she lay down in her pleasant room was of Mrs. Reynell's maid, Harriet Myers, or, rather, Harriet Santi, though the old name came most familiarly to them all.

She had met the woman in the morning coming out of her mistress's room, and amid all her own agitation had felt for her evident sorrow and anxiety.

"You are much attached to your mistress?" she said, inquiringly, after asking for news of Gwendoline.

"She is a kind mistress to me, madam; I have no motive to be otherwise."

"And you are alarmed about her?"

"I have reason to be; she is in peril—Heaven only knows how great! That is, she is very ill," she added, in some confusion, faltering, as she met Katherine's keen eye fixed upon her.

"You fear she will die?"

"I do."

"You think there is more in her illness than fever, however brought on. You say she is in peril. I know she is, from her husband."

"Mrs. Hastings! Madam! I do not understand you!"

"I think you do. I fancy I know the secret of your being in Mrs. Reynell's service. You see I remember you."

"Oh, madam, do not betray me. My husband knows all my bitter history, but that one shameful episode; do not expose me, madam, as you are a woman, loved and respected as a pure, stainless matron."

She caught Katherine's dress as she spoke, with a wild, hunted look upon her face that was pitiable to see, but Mrs. Hastings looked sternly at her.

"What do you deserve when I find you in that man's service?" she asked.

"You know all, madam? But of course you do—you must."

"Know all? Was I not to have been Philip Reynell's wife? Was not the place your hapless mistress fills to have been mine? If I do not know, who should? But what can I think of you, when I find you here, his tool—his faithful servant in all things, I have no doubt?"

She spoke bitterly, almost angrily, and Harriet covered her face with her hands and sobbed.

"No, madam, you wrong me," she said. "I was Miss Haydon's maid before he, Mr. Reynell, came home. I was in service in India before that. From the hour you last saw me in Calcutta I have striven, Heaven knows, to lead a pure, honest life. The world is very hard on women, and it has been bitter work, but I have done it."

"And you saw no more of the man who had brought you to such a dreadful strait?"

"David Burroughs had forsaken me, madam; it was that which drove me to despair."

"And you did not see him again?"

"No, madam."

"Were you his wife? Pardon me; I have no right to ask, perhaps, but—"

"You have, madam; you had a kind word for me when every one else turned from me. You have every right. I believed I was his wife, as Heaven hears me, I did. I thought the ceremony he told me was a marriage was binding. I was but a girl—a silly, ignorant one, that knew no better. He might have spared me."

"Your mistress is safe with you, then?"

"She has been kind to me," repeated Harriet. "I would protect her with my life."

"The end is very near now," Katherine said, half to herself, as it seemed, but Harriet answered her.

"Will you not speak, madam? I cannot. I have sworn I would not. If I do—"

"You may pay the penalty with your life. I understand. Keep your silence unbroken. A thousand tongues will tell the story without any aid of ours. Poor girl! Poor young thing! I pity her with all my heart."

"She is to be pitied, ma'am—all the more that she loves him so."

"I would spare her if I could; but his fall must crush her. Come to my room for a few minutes before the last dinner-bell rings. I want to speak to you again. I will be quite alone."

"I will, madam."

"And do not fear for my breathing a word likely to come to your husband's ears," Katherine said, kindly, as she parted from her, and she returned to her mistress's room.

"Poor creature," she thought, "the man must know it sometime; better she had no secrets from him now."

But Guiseppe Santi never knew the secret his wife had kept from him till she was no longer his to upbraid. Death had claimed her before that hidden episode in her life was told him, and left him a stunned, dazed widower, for, despite his coolness and sternness toward her, she had been a good and dutiful wife to him.

Katherine was listening for her footsteps when the listlessness born of heat and agitation overpowered her, and she dropped off into a doze. A *carafe* with some deliciously cool drink, and a glass beside it, stood on a little table in the shadow of the green and white curtains which shrouded the window. Mrs. Armdale was a great believer in American drinks, and her *chef* was great in their composition.

The rooms of her guests were never without something of the sort, or the means of compounding them, effervescing or otherwise. Katherine had taken a draught just before she went to sleep. She saw the lumps of ice on their bed of green leaves, the half-empty glass, and the *carafe*, and yet with her eyes open, as it seemed to her, she dreamed.

She thought she heard a stealthy step outside the door, and the handle softly turned. She could not see the face of the intruder, for her face was to the door, but she saw that it was a man. She was spellbound, and could not speak or move. She tried to cry out in vain as the man bent over the *carafe* on the table. She heard a slight sound on both tumbler and bottle, as though glass had touched glass, but for her life she could not scream.

Then the form, still with its face turned away, approached her workbasket—a deep, capacious affair of fanciful wickerwork, full of odds and ends, for Mrs. Hasting was no idle woman, and always had plenty of work on hand. He plunged his hand deep down into the heterogeneous mass of materials, and Katherine heard him laugh as he drew it back empty.

"Now, Mrs. Hastings, we are quits," he said, and turned his evil face full on her.

It was Philip Reynell, and she fought with the drowsiness that overpowered—in vain striving with all her might to rise and confront him. She could not rouse. Whether she had unwillingly taken anything to induce sleep, or whether the agitation and restlessness of the preceding night had wearied her, she could not tell; but the uncomfortable dream passed over. She never heard the door open again, and was conscious of thinking how uncomfortable it was to dream so, when she fell off into a sounder sleep, which lasted, it seemed to her, for hours—in reality it was only a very few minutes—when all of a sudden she started up wide awake, as we sometimes do, with all our faculties clear. To her dying day Katherine would never forget what she saw in that waking instant.

The room was in shadow, as before; the green jalousies kept out the sun, and made it deliciously cool. The bright glass of the *carafe* sparkled like diamonds in the little rays that came in through the chinks. The scent of the flowers and the song of the birds was in the air, and no trace remained of the dream that had caused her such discomfort. Her workbasket stood in its place, as it seemed, untouched, and by its stand stood Harriet Santi, with a full tumbler in her hand.

"Don't, don't drink," said Katherine, starting up with the remembrance of her dream flashing across her; but before she could speak, the woman had drained the tumbler thirstily, greedily, almost to the very dregs.

"What have you done—oh, what have you done?" shrieked Katherine, springing at her with flashing eyes, and catching her by the arm.

Harriet looked bewildered and frightened. She almost thought Mrs. Hastings was mad.

"I humbly beg your pardon, ma'am," she said, deprecatingly. "I was so feverish and parched, I saw the bottle and glass there and ventured to drink some. I will take the bottle and glass down, and bring fresh."

"No, no—it's not that! Did you taste anything?"

"Nothing but the flavoring, ma'am. It was a little strong, that was all.

"Then thank Heaven it was only a dream! I am out of sorts, Harriet, and I dreamed—Ah! Heaven help us all! It was no dream?"

For Harriet Santi's face turned livid and contracted, as with a terrible pain, and before Katherine could do aught to save her she had fallen, face downward, on the carpet, and lay writhing with agonized moans that were terrible to hear.

"Help! help! murder!"

Katherine's voice rang out in shrill shrieks along the corridors, and the guests and the master and mistress of the house came flocking to the room. They raised the poor woman up, and laid her on the couch Katherine had quitted, and brought brandy and restoratives, and chafed the poor, cramped limbs already growing cold with the last chill of mortality.

It was all no use—Harriet Santi was dying—she never uttered an intelligible word again; and in half an hour from the time when Katherine had awoke to see her standing there, she lay a stiffening corpse in among them. Nearly every one in the house had crowded into the room except Philip Reynell—he and his valet were both absent; he had come down dressed very early, one of the servants said, and had sent Guiseppe out on an errand from which he had not returned. The valet came back in the midst of the confusion, and was met by the intelligence that his wife was dying in a fit in Mrs. Hastings's room.

Rushing up-stairs, he was met by Mr. Armdale, who stopped him gently.

"Come in here," he said, drawing him into his dressing-room and shutting the door. "My poor fellow, this is a terrible blow for you."

"Is she so very ill, sir? They told me—"

He stopped suddenly, awed by the look in the gentleman's face.

"Is she—" he began; but he read the truth in the kindly eyes bent upon him so pityingly, and he sank into the nearest chair, and covered his face with his hand.

"Dead!" he murmured, in a bewildered sort of way. "I cannot understand it! I left her quite well—my poor girl! Let me go to her, sir, if you please. Perhaps something may be done."

"Nothing can be done," was the grave answer; and Dr. Guicoli, entering at the moment, confirmed the words.

The meeting to which he had gone had been postponed, and he had returned to the house not ten minutes before Katherine's shrieks had drawn every one to her room. It was his hand which had closed the sightless eyes and straightened the agonized limbs. His face was very grave as he came to Guiseppe's side.

"Don't go yet," he said, gently. "There is more to be told yet, my poor friend."

"More to be told? What more?"

"It was no fit, Santi."

"No fit?"

"No!"

He could not grasp the meaning of the doctor's words and looks; he could only feel that they had told him that his wife was dead, and remembered that almost the last words he had spoken to her had been harsh and unkind ones.

"Not a fit?" he repeated. "What then?"

"Poison!"

Dr. Guicoli spoke the word slowly and distinctly, his hand on Guiseppe's shoulder. There was no doubting the truth.

"Poison!" he repeated. "Who gave it her? She didn't take it herself."

"She took it in mistake," the doctor replied, in the same quiet tone. "It was not meant for her. There must be no more beating about the bush now, Santi. Your poor wife drank a glass of lemonade, or something of the kind, out of a glass placed for Mrs. Hastings—specially prepared for her by some one who had reason to wish for her death."

"Oh, Heaven help me! I see it all!" groaned poor Santi. "Let me go now, sir, —let me look upon my wife's face, that I may have strength to face her murderer. I know he threatened her. He has fulfilled his threats at last!"

They led him, almost beside himself, to Katherine's room, where his dead wife lay. Very calm and still she looked by this time. Katherine was still in the room, almost as white and still as the dead woman, but refusing to go.

"He will come," she said, when they would have led her away. "Let me face him here in front of his handiwork."

Mr. Hastings was supporting his wife as she spoke, and the truth began to dawn on him.

"Great Heaven! how horrible!" he said, clasping her with a rush of thankful joy that he had her indeed alive in his arms. "Don't touch that table, Haughton—don't move anything here by so much as a hair's breadth till the police come. Who can have done this?"

For the terrible reality had not come to him yet, and he could not understand what had happened.

"My master!"

It was the husky voice of Guiseppe which uttered the words, as he knelt beside the cold form of his wife.

"My master—curse him! I have held my tongue for money, as she did," pointing to the corpse. "There was no one to be wronged by it, and I was paid; but now—"

"Does he mean Mr. Reynell?" said Mr. Armdale, in bewilderment. "I don't understand."

"I do," Mr. Hastings said, as the door opened, and Philip Reynell entered.

"I heard there was something the matter," he said, "and I took the liberty of coming in. Is Mrs. Hastings ill?"

"No, I am quite well," she said, standing up, strong and full of purpose now. "There is your victim, sir—not here!"

She pointed to the couch, and they stood aside and let him see who lay there.

The surprise and shock shook his iron nerves at last, and his face blanched to deathly whiteness.

"She!" he gasped. "How!—how!—"

He literally could not speak, and looked round helplessly.

"She drank what you mixed for me," Katherine replied, in the same cold, hard tone. "I saw you come in, when you thought I was asleep. You put something into that *carafe* and glass, and then buried the bottle in my work-basket. You wanted me to be a suicide in the eyes of the world. You overreached yourself, and killed her—your victim of years ago!"

They looked at her wonderingly, for her tone was as calm and cool as though no excitement or agitation were tearing at her heart.

"I!" he gasped. "I have been out—I was not here!"

"You were," she replied, in the same cool tone. "Don't blacken your soul with another lie. The game is up, David Burroughs; throw down your cards—you have played the last in this world!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"COLD!"

Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small;
Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all. —*Longfellow.*

"DAVID BURROUGHS!" Nearly all present echoed Katherine's words, for not the slightest meaning attached to them in the minds of Mr. Armdale's guests. Captain Haughton understood, so did Mr. Hastings, so did Dr. Guicoli, but the rest were in darkness.

"Yes—David Burroughs," she replied, calmly. "Philip Reynell's servant; the man he chose on board the Otranto—the B. C."

"It's a lie!" thundered the man she spoke of. "Mrs. Hastings has bitter reason to hate me, gentlemen, but she is very much changed from the Katherine Branscombe of old days if she stoops to lies for the sake of revenge, even on me. Let me pass, gentlemen, if you please; this is no place for us till that poor corpse is cared for."

His face was awfully white, and he put his hand to his side. Captain Haughton stepped between him and the door.

"Stay, if you please," he said; "whoever or whatever you are, this poor woman's death has to be accounted for. What Mrs. Hastings has asserted I believe from my soul to be the truth—I have believed it a long time."

"I knew it," Katherine said. "He thought by his matchless effrontery to deceive even me. Did he think I could so soon have forgotten the man I had promised to marry? He has neither the face, voice, nor bearing of Philip Reynell, his master, whom he murdered for his own evil ends."

"No, Mrs. Hastings," said the quiet voice of the Maltese doctor, "he did not do that. The person who died in Malta under my care died from purely natural causes. I can swear to that. I suspected this fraud from the first, but had no means of verifying it. The man whose corpse I examined, who was buried at Malta, bore no mark of dishonor anywhere about his person."

"*He* does," said Guiseppe, lifting his head from the corpse of his wife. "I have seen it a dozen times. I have been well paid for keeping his guilty secret—the sin has brought its own punishment, and through him. Our knowledge of his crime brought us together—his hand has broken the tie he helped to make so binding."

"There is yet another can speak to the truth or falsehood of my words. Come here, Edwards; is that man your master?"

"No." Edwards spoke the word from the bottom of his heart. "I understand it all now," he said. "No wonder he didn't want to see me. It was his hand that pushed me down the old well, or whatever the place was; it was he who sent me to a madhouse to become a lunatic among madmen through their hideous companionship."

"No, by Heaven I did not!" replied the accused man. "I never knew you were alive for a certainty till I came to this accursed house. Oh, you need not grip my shoulder so tightly, my worthy host, I am not going to run away; but I would suggest your leaving this room, as I said before. It is no place for us. Take my arm, Captain Haughton, if you fear my slipping through the walls or down through the floor. I hav'n't the slightest intention of giving you the slip, I assure you—at least, in the way you think."

Captain Haughton and Mr. Hastings took each an arm, and the party went down to the dining-room. Mr. Armdale spoke a word to a servant walking in the hall, who presently rode off on a fleet horse, and then followed the party in and shut the door. Mrs. Armdale was crying with fright, Katherine was coldly calm, her agitation could not spend itself now, and the rest of the ladies were bursting with curiosity to see the end of the wonderful drama enacting before their eyes.

"Send those prying fools away," Philip Reynell said, as they passed through the group of servants, "and then make your lying tales good if you can. I shall owe you something for this day's work, Mrs. Hastings."

"You did your best to pay my wife," rejoined Katherine's husband. "If her statement were not true, why wish her out of the way? As she says, the game is up; bravado will serve your turn no longer. Mr. Armdale has sent for the police."

"On the word of an angry woman?"

"On the word of nearly all here. Doctor Guicoli can speak to what he knows; your master's old servant will swear you are not Philip Reynell; your valet will testify that you bear the mark of a man discharged from Her Majesty's service with the deepest degradation that can come to a soldier; and, beyond all this, there is the testimony of that poor corpse up-stairs—your latest victim—your last on this side of eternity."

The accused man turned round and faced them all, still with that awful pallor on his face, and a strange twitching about the corners of his mouth.

"The game is up," he said, calmly. "I throw up my cards. Mrs. Hastings, if revenge be really sweet, as we are told it is, you must be tasting it to the full enjoyment at this moment. I am David Burroughs, the outcast, the disgraced soldier. Oh, stop a minute, gentlemen, before you howl me down, and listen to me. Doctor Guicoli here has told you that the man he examined and saw buried in Malta died a natural death. I swear he did, as far as I am concerned."

"I believe he speaks the truth," the doctor said.

"If he can speak the truth," Mr. Hastings said. "His life has been a living lie."

"Since then, I grant it. Hear me for one moment longer. Is that the police? You have lost no time, gentlemen."

It was not the officers, but a hastily-driven fly, from which a comely woman got out, and was shown to the housekeeper's room.

"I have yet a few minutes," he went on. "I don't think yours will be a long or a triumphant revenge, Mrs. Hastings; but I will throw no obstacle in your way in obtaining it."

"Go on, if you have anything to tell us," Mr. Armstrong said. "Clear yourself of all suspicion regarding Philip Reynell's death, if you can."

"I can say nothing more than this gentleman's testimony can confirm. I loved my master. In the short time we had been together he had treated me with kindness, and roused in me the desire to begin a new life, far from the old trammels of wickedness and dishonor. Had he lived, I would have been his faithful slave as long as my life lasted. I should have had the honor of being your servant, madam, in that case," he added, with a bitter sneer; "but the devil, who has thwarted me all my life, came beside me, and denied me the chance of being a better man. Mr. Reynell died suddenly—in one moment—while I was sitting beside him writing letters: and, with the knowledge that he was no more, there came into my mind as suddenly as a lightning-flash the scheme which I have carried out—not unsuccessfully, as you will admit. I knew that my master had no relations that would know him in England. Scarcely any one had seen him in Valetta, and I was sufficiently like him to pass among strangers. As to the remote contingency of India friends coming home, I let that be. I was nearly bowled out only the day after my master's death. A young officer—"

"I know," said Katherine. "He told me how terribly Philip Reynell was altered. He said he only saw him asleep."

"No; I feigned sleep, lest he should speak to me. That is all my story; the rest you know. I came home, was accepted by every one, except—" he paused, and shuddered visibly, and had to set his chattering teeth before he could go on—"except one woman who knew me in India, and whom I had wronged."

"Yes, we know," said Mr. Hastings, gravely. "She has paid dearly for her knowledge."

"My valet was in some sort my accomplice. He guessed at the secret, and I paid him and her to keep it. I surmised he was keeping Edwards out of the way, though I never spoke on the subject with him, and supplied him indirectly with the means to do so. There is no more to tell; but I have a favor to ask—not of one, but of all of you."

"Name it."

It was Captain Haughton who spoke, and he spoke for all. There was something in the hunted look of the guilty man that moved them, despite his crimes. He was not cowering nor cringing, notwithstanding his confession, and the diamonds on the front of his shirt and his shapely hands showed not a trace of trembling. They shone as steadily as in Philip Reynell's brightest days, and the hands that clasped each other loosely in front of him trembled not one whit. Nothing but the ashy paleness of his face would show that he was there a felon among the men so lately his equals, waiting for the officers of justice to take him away to prison.

"What we can do we will," the captain said. "Speak your wish."

"My wife," and the white lips trembled now. "Treat her as gently as you can. She loved me, poor girl, and Heaven knows I loved her. Until last night she never knew but what her husband was an honorable gentleman, with no stain upon his name. The knowledge has well-nigh killed her—should she recover to be sensible of what has happened to me, do not visit my sin on her or on her child."

"Have no fear for her," Mr. Armdale said. "She is a suffering wife and mother—we will treat her as such. There are the officers, Hastings."

A conveyance from Warwick had driven noisily up, the servants were gathered at the door in an affrighted group, wondering what the police could possibly want at Harbledon. The idea of murder in connection with poor Harriet Santi's death had not reached the servants'-hall yet.

"One moment," Mr. Hastings said, as Captain Haughton moved to open the door. "Will you answer me one question?"

"Twenty if you like—but be brief—I cannot speak very well."

His breath came in short gasps, and his face knit as though with pain.

"Who are you?"

"Who am I? I have the honor of confirming this lady's statement. I am David Burroughs. For my pedigree, my father was a horse-dealer; my mother, well, after his death or desertion, I never was very sure which, she married a gentleman—fortunate woman, wasn't she—whom she in her turn deserted. I wasn't fortunate in my bringing up, gentlemen."

"I knew it—I knew it," murmured Mr. Hastings. "I saw the likeness, and could not account for it, from the hour I met this man in Malta. Her son! Great heaven, how inscrutable is retributive justice!"

Katherine understood, so did Captain Haughton—to the rest of the company the words seemed Greek.

"I knew her," was all the explanation Mr. Hastings vouchsafed, and the entrance of the police put an end to further questioning or explanation.

It was a strange, incongruous scene—the table white with snowy linen, and glittering with plate and glass set for the neglected dinner—the dismayed guests and the terrified servants. Perhaps the least agitated of all was the pale culprit, with his ashy face and his manacled hands.

"Is there any need for that?" Katherine had asked, as the click of the handcuffs made itself heard.

"It is a charge of murder, ma'am," was the stern though civil reply; "we dare not omit using them."

And the accused man had bidden them "do their duty, and make haste;" and so they drove off, leaving the silence of a great horror behind them. When the cab had vanished down the avenue, Edwards found himself clasped in the arms of the sonsy, motherly woman who had arrived in the midst of the confusion.

"Don't you know me, Sam?" she asked. "Eh, lad! I knew you in a minute, though you're fifteen years older than when I saw you last. I'm Aggy."

"You my sister!" exclaimed Edwards. "Why, I might have known—you've the same bonnie dark eyes and the same smile—my dear! my dear!—thank Heaven we are spared to see one another again! I never hoped for it, Aggy."

"But we have, and I'm well and thriving, and so are you, ain't you?"

"Thriving! Yes, with the best master that ever man had. Come and see him, and Miss Kate—that's Mrs. Hastings, you know—she'll see you, in spite of this dreadful business."

"I knew it, dear; I've known it all along."

"How?"

"I saw Mr. Reynell—no; the man, you know, at Boscobel—when I went to ask after you, and the very same day, when I went home, I opened your boxes, and found your master's picture. Mayhew, he thought I had gone mad, I was so put about over it; but I kept it to myself, I durs'n't speak."

"You did right, I am sure. Here's my master—come and speak to him."

Mrs. Mayhew being introduced to Katherine, timidly proffered her services in any way she could be made useful.

"You see, ma'am," she said, speaking of the unconscious Gwendoline, "they tell me the poor lany's quite without a maid, and there's many a thing said in delirium as makes mischief when taken further. I'd nurse her and welcome if you thought fit."

"Indeed, we should be very glad," Katherine said, wearily. "Of course, we are all in confusion, and Mrs. Armdale is sadly put about."

So Mrs. Mayhew was installed as nurse to the hapless Gwendoline, who was all unconscious of the trouble that had befallen her; and the guests that could, and who were not wanted at the inevitable inquest, hurried away.

Excited groups of people crowded into the park, and stared up at the windows of the mansion, as though the outside walls could tell of the horrors within—horrors multiplied a thousandfold by the "common liar," report, as the news had flown from lip to lip.

The prisoner had murdered half a dozen people in cold blood, and set fire to the house, before the story was an hour old; and the police office to which he was taken was literally besieged with eager people waiting to see the monster of whom such reports were spreading. He passed through them quietly enough when the cab drove up, replied to the inspector that he had nothing to say to the charge, and was locked up to be examined the next morning, after being duly searched. Nothing suspicious was found on him—his penknife and a few other articles in his pockets were taken away, and he was left alone. Asked if he wanted anything, and he replied—

"Only another blanket—two—three—half a dozen if you have them! It's cold—cold!"

"Cold!" and it was the sultriest night they had known the whole summer through—so sultry that the turnkey was fain to unbuckle his stiff stock, and unfasten his tight coat, and go about unofficial and gasping—so hot, that at Harbledon windows were wide open, and men were swinging punkahs, and maids were fanning the exhausted guests, yet the prisoner was cold. The turnkey brought blankets and a rug, and their hands accidentally touched.

"Heaven bless me!" he said, involuntarily, "you're as cold as a corpse."

His charge smiled.

"Am I?" he said. "Perhaps I shall be warmer with those wraps."

He rolled himself in them, and lay down, giving his gaoler a courteous good-night as he closed the door upon him.

The man returned it civilly, and every time he passed looked in through the little grating. Every time he saw him lying still and motionless, save for the regular breathing which rose and fell as calmly as though the sleeper were in the sweet trance of infant innocence.

Morning came at last, bringing the hour when all within the walls must rise to their daily routine of life and business. He went into the cell, and touched the sleeper on the shoulder.

"Time to get up," he said.

There was no response, and again he shook the recumbent figure.

Something in the unyielding rigidity of what he touched struck him with an unpleasant chill, and he pulled down the rugs and looked at the quiet face. The eyes were wide open, staring at him with a ghastly stare, but the face was set and cold.

In a moment his cry for help rang through the corridor. The prisoner was dead. He had slipped through the fingers of this world's justice to stand before the higher tribunal of Heaven. With the collapse of his ambitious scheme of crime, the chords of life, never very strong, had snapped, and he was gone to answer for his sins at the bar where justice never errs nor mercy fails.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"EARTH TO EARTH AND DUST TO DUST."

The book is completed,
And closed like the day,
And the hand that has written it
Lays it away. —*Longfellow.*

And, reader, when my last of lines is penned,
My earthly joy, grief, laughter at an end,
Whene'er I write your name, may I write friend?"
—*Thackeray.*

Perhaps there was hardly one of those who had known the false master of Boscobel during his brief career, that did not feel the tidings of his sudden death a relief rather than otherwise. It would have been so very terrible to have had their friend and comrade tried and hanged for murder—and of the murder there was convincing proof, though the victim was not the one intended by him. He had rushed blindly upon his fate, as it seemed. The bottle containing the poison was easily traced to a chemist's shop in Brecon, where he had been in the habit of dealing.

What crime he had meditated when he purchased the deadly drug was known only to himself and Heaven. He had been very particular in his inquiries as to the quantities and effects in the use of it; but the druggist had no scruple in selling to a gentleman so well known as Mr. Philip Reynell.

Nothing could be said or done at the inquest. A verdict of "wilful murder" was recorded against David Burroughs in the coroner's books; but who the owner of the name really was very few people actually knew.

He was buried in the churchyard at Warwick, a plain stone, with the initials "*D. B.*," and the date of his death, alone marking the spot. A few of the gentlemen from Holmdale attended the funeral, and listened, with a curious choking feeling in their throats, to the holy words which were so like a mockery when read over the corpse of a murderer caught almost red-handed in the fact.

"Now we commit his body to the dust in the sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection," sounds strangely confident over some ashes; but with them we commit the soul to Him who has said, "I will have mercy and not justice," and hope with a hope that is almost certainty.

Poor Harriet Myers, who had paid for her knowledge of the guilty secret with her life, was laid in the little churchyard at Harbledon, and Guiseppe returned with Dr. Guicoli to Malta. He knew he had rendered himself amenable to the laws of the land by his participation in his master's crimes, and sought no mercy from any—not even Edwards, who had suffered so much at his hands.

"I don't bear any malice, sir," he said to his master, who spoke to him on the subject. "If no one else wants to punish him, I don't. He's in sore trouble, and I don't want to add to it."

So they let him go unharmed, and Dr. Guicoli took leave of Mr. and Mrs. Armdale, and promised to see that Guiseppe went straight home to Malta.

"You will see me back again," he said. "I am going now on a mission for Mrs. Hastings. When it is fulfilled I shall return for a short time."

"I wish I had not come here," Katherine said to her hostess when she took her leave. "The doctor tells me that that miserable man's life could not by any possibility have been a long one. The disease of which he died only wanted some sudden agitation or illness to make it fatal. His poor innocent wife would have been spared much extra pain but for me."

Mrs. Armdale shook her head. The worry of the last week had sadly sobered the gay little woman.

"She had cried more," she said, pitifully, "in those few days than ever she had done in all her life before, and she didn't like crying."

But with all her volatile nature, she was a kindly, sympathizing creature, and felt sincerely for poor Gwendoline, lying in her darkened room under the care of Mrs. Mayhew and the warm-hearted Mary Underwood, who had arrived on the very day

of Harriet Santi's funeral, and found, instead of a gay household of cheerful guests, an almost deserted mansion, with the hideous shadow of murder hanging over it, and the Mrs. Reynell of whom she had heard so much lying at death's door, unconscious, as it seemed of all that had befallen her.

"Tell me if I can be of any use," had been Mary's first plea, after her cousin had made her feel at home with her warm cousinly greeting, and Mrs. Hastings had been duly introduced to "Cousin Mary," and Katherine, seeing that it was no idle offer, gave her the office of helping Mrs. Mayhew in the sick room.

"It is a sad task, dear," she said; "but it is only for a few days. We return to Holmdale next week, and you will see your home, Mary. You must be very happy with us, dear."

And Mary declared from her heart that she could be happy anywhere with her kind cousin, and cried heartily with joy behind the shadow of poor Gwendoline's bed-curtains over the blissful change in her hard life.

"What do you mean, dear Mrs. Armdale?" Katherine queried, when her little hostess so persisted in denying that she had caused Gwendoline's illness. "The pain has come to that poor girl entirely through me. It wanted but my recognition—or rather my non-recognition of him—to complete the terrible chain of proof which has embittered her whole life."

"She will not feel it," said Mrs. Armdale, gravely.

"How? Is she worse?—is she dead? I saw her this morning."

"Neither: she is better bodily, but in mind she will never be. Did you not notice how terribly apathetic and bewildered she seems?"

"The shock, of course."

"She has had no shock, except the one of which her husband spoke, which caused her illness. She will never know that she is a widow, in all human probability, nor understand the dreadful end of her wretched husband."

"Poor thing!" said Katherine, sadly, "and yet I am almost tempted to be thankful that it is so—it seems a merciful dispensation of Providence. I wish her guardian and his wife were here."

For Mr. and Mrs. Nottley were away taking holiday on the Continent, with no fixed address, and telegrams were of no avail. They had been found at last, and a message had arrived that morning saying they would be at Harbledon as fast as rail and steam could bring them. Meanwhile, Mr. Hastings must go home; "justice business" would wait no longer, and Katherine was growing conscious that the strain on her nerves and feelings could not be borne much longer. Mrs. Mayhew was to go home, accompanied by her brother—who was to have a month for a visit to Clyro—as soon as Mr. Nottley and his wife arrived.

The advertisement for the heirs-at-law and next of kin of Philip Reynell, Esq., deceased, brought a number of applicants, but the lot fell upon the son of a first cousin of Philip's father—a struggling physician, with an ailing wife and a houseful of hearty, hungry children, who tore their clothes, and wore out their shoes, and required schooling, and devoured their father's substance in a way that had driven him nearly mad, and whitened his hair, though only forty years had passed over his head.

Never did fortune fall so opportunely on any man—never were pair more sincerely and humbly thankful for the good gifts of Heaven. So grateful were they, as their young ones filled the echoing corridors with shouts and glee, and the poor mother grew better under the influence of generous living and luxurious surroundings, that they forgot to feel bitter about the two years they had been kept out of it by an usurper.

Mr. Arbuthnot Reynell was very kind to poor Gwendoline, who was brought back to the rectory to while away the weary hours of her lost life. Not that they were weary to her—she was always expecting Philip.

"He was coming to-morrow," she told everybody, and it was quite startling to meet her wandering about the park and grounds, the same Gwendoline, to all appearance, who had been wooed and won under the shadows of those spreading elms. But for a nameless something in her face, and the set sadness of the lips that never smiled now, there was no change in her. She had no knowledge of her widowhood, nor sense of aught that had happened. Mr. Reynell was, in her imagination, the new steward, obeying Philip's injunctions in living there while he was abroad; and they humored her fancy, and let her imagine herself mistress of Boscobel, only visiting the rectory while her husband was away.

But there came a time when her guardian took her away from Boscobel for awhile—a time when Katherine Hastings saw for the first and last time the home that should have been hers. Dr. Guicoli returned to England, and announced his mission complete. He and Captain Haughton had brought all that was mortal of poor Philip Reynell from the graveyard at Valetta to be laid beside his father in the Boscobel vault. His friends gathered together from far and near to stand beside his coffin as they lowered it into its last resting-place. Major and Mrs. Scorby were there, and Mrs. Sloper and the captain, all full of honest thankfulness that they had not been mistaken in the lad they loved and trusted. Katherine and her husband, and Captain Haughton and Bruce Chartham—a captain also now—who pulled his great tawny moustaches, and muttered "by Jove!" a good many times as he looked at Mrs. Hastings, and wondered how he could ever have the presumption to dream of such a splendid woman as anything but a goddess, to be set on a pedestal to be worshipped.

And there were humbler mourners, too—Edwards and his sister, and many a soldier of the 62d, some who had tramped a score of weary miles to see the last of the blithe young officer they had one and all loved.

"Earth to earth, and dust to dust," and with the clods that fell upon that coffin our story ends. The pleasant companionship between reader and author closes, and we bid good-bye—to poor Gwendoline, mournfully happy in her helpless unconsciousness; to Katherine, in her pleasant home, blessed with her husband's love; to bonnie Mary Underwood, an ardent worshipper of a baby boy, the cherished heir of Holmdale, and shyly in love with the tall, handsome rector of the parish, who is a bachelor.

Report says they are to be married very soon, and those who know all parties say the Rev. Charles Somers will have a bad time of it with his mother and sister-in-law. But Mary has privately confided to her cousin that she knows Charles will keep them at a distance, and she sincerely hopes he will, and Katherine's husband says it will be best for both if he can, but he doubts. Mary is a happy girl now, and not a few echo her opinion, that in all the wide world there is not such another darling, unselfish, loveable woman as "Cousin Kate."

THE END.

☞ A fat man in Indiana declined to be nominated to Congress unless he could be elected to two seats.

☞ A mother (over her children)—"Precious lambs!" Father—"Lambs? Humph! then what am I?"

RICHMOND SWITCH.

A correspondent writes to us as follows of the late terrible accident on the Providence and Stonington Railroad:—

"Richmond Switch," cried the conductor, as our train stopped at a forlorn-looking station on the Providence and Stonington railroad. Immediately car-windows went up and heads were obtruded to catch a glimpse of the spot where a terrible catastrophe had so recently happened. It was the morning of the 22d, only four days after the fatal accident, yet little remained to tell the frightful tale; the new, unfinished aspect of the temporary bridge across which all the trains now run, a spot upon the track blackened by the fire, an engine and some men at work driving piles for a permanent bridge, a number of trucks on a side track laden with wheels and blackened iron, some of the incombustible remnants of the wrecked train, these were all that we could discover in the bird's-eye glance which our brief stop afforded. But a friend who entered the train at that station told us that she saw in the depot that morning a portion of a human foot, still encased in a shoe or boot, and scorched, but not burnt. It appeared to have been torn off just forward of the instep, and from the narrowness of the sole, was, in all probability, the foot of a woman. Terrible relic of a terrible disaster! Alas for the mourners who cannot claim even the mutilated remains of their beloved dead!

Every reader, doubtless, has learned the fact that toward dawn on the morning of the 11th, the steamboat-train on the abovementioned railroad, while going at the rate of forty miles an hour, rushed into a chasm which was caused by the washing away of the railroad bridge near Richmond Switch, wrecked itself and killed outright seven or eight, besides wounding severely about twenty persons. The wreck took fire; and probably several were burned to death. The exact loss of life is not known.

This fatal casualty happened contrary to all foreseen, human probability. The pretty, but insignificant, Meadow Brook was a narrow, shallow, and apparently harmless rivulet. No one could have thought that its waters, accumulated by the dam above, even though they had power to escape suddenly, could have washed away the strong granite abutments of the bridge. But grim Death can make all things his agents. And, were it not for a seemingly providential combination of circumstances, much greater would have been the mortality caused by that pretty Meadow Brook at Richmond Switch.

At Stonington Junction, the shore-line train and the steamboat-train had contended for the right of way, the steamboat-train being late. Fortunate indeed was it for the heavily-laden shore-line train that the steamboat-train, with its three long trucks and its few passengers, was allowed to go on ahead. Was it not providential, also, that the steamboat-train, contrary to custom, had its smoking-car attached to the rear of the train, thus saving alive at least sixteen or seventeen men, who otherwise must have met a terrible death?

Again, the shore-line train so closely follows the steamboat train, that the conductor of the latter, while standing on the footboards of the rear car, can frequently see the headlights of the other train even when turning a short curve, and he is accustomed to signal that train to "keep its distance." He was in the act of getting the signal lights for this purpose, when the shock came. Had he been killed, or had he lost his presence of mind, the shore-line train, with its many passengers, would have rushed to destruction.

There are some incidents connected with the casualty which show how contrary to all probabilities, facts do frequently occur. One passenger upon this train, who escaped unhurt, was also upon the ill-starred Metis when she was wrecked last August, and was saved from a watery death by floating ashore upon a bale of cotton. Mr. W. D. Guile, the engineer, who was burned upon the engine, had seen railroad service in various parts of the United States. His last position before he came upon the Stonington road was in the far West, upon a road which ran along the edge of a high cliff where, had the cars been thrown from the track, death would have been inevitable. He could not bear the nervous excitement of the situation, and came East only to meet a sudden and frightful death in this apparently harmless locality. WARE.

How Birds Learn to Sing and Build.

(From the Popular Science Monthly.)

What is instinct? It is the "faculty of performing complex acts absolutely without instruction or previously acquired knowledge." Instinct, then, would enable animals to perform spontaneously acts which, in the case of man, pre-supposes ratiocination, a logical train of thought. But, when we test the observed facts which are usually put forward to prove the power of instinct, it is found that they are seldom conclusive. It was on such grounds that the song of birds was taken to be innate, albeit a very ready experiment would have shown that it comes from the education they receive. During the last century Barrington brought up some linnets, taken from the nest, in company with larks of sundry varieties, and found that every one of the linnets adopted completely the song of the master set over him, so that now these linnets—larks by naturalization—formed a company apart when placed among birds of their own species. Even the nightingale, whose native sound is so sweet, exhibits, under domestication, a considerable readiness to imitate other singing birds. The song of the bird is, therefore, determined by its education, and the same must be true as to nest-building. A bird brought up in a cage does not construct the nest peculiar to its species. In vain will you supply all the necessary materials; the bird will employ them without skill, and will oftentimes even renounce all purpose of building anything like a nest. Does not this well-known fact prove that, instead of being guided by instinct, the bird learns how to construct his nest, just as a man learns how to build a house?

Not for Life, but till Divorce.

Mr. Albert Knight, who was about to be united in marriage to one of the fairest daughters of Malta, N. Y., whispered in the minister's ear that, if it was all the same to him, he would prefer that the words "till death do you part," be omitted from the service. He couldn't tell, he said, but he might want to get divorced sometime, and disliked to take vows he might not be able to fulfill. The clergyman answered that he did not come as a lawyer, but in an ecclesiastical way, and if he performed any service, it would be that of the church, unchanged. And then Mr. Knight had the exceeding bad taste to enter into an extended logical argument on the point involved, until the divine became disgusted and left; informing the mother of the bride expectant that Knight did not wish to marry her daughter. The tired guests at length sat down to a solemn and silent repast, and the restraint that prevailed told that it was not a wedding feast.

☞ When a young gentleman can enjoy an hour's quiet talk with a woman neither young, beautiful, nor fascinating in any way, there's sure to be something good and genuine in him.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

☞ Shooting robins is a cruelty. It is also a senseless act. There is no use in killing ten robins to make a meal, when one cat would do as well. And the town is overburdened with cats.

☞ A clergyman in Delaware has been obliged to sue for his salary.

☞ It is a little singular how much valuable time a woman will take up in studying the post-mark of a letter to see where it comes from, when she can open the letter and find out at once.

☞ A Kentucky man has carefully preserved for twenty-seven years the bouquet Jenny Lind held in her hand at one of her concerts in Louisville.

☞ The New York Herald reporter who put on a diving-suit and went down among the dead men in the Atlantic wreck now wears linen-collars on Sunday.

☞ A West street man says the longest funeral he ever heard of took place a week ago. His hired girl went to it, and hasn't got back yet.

☞ As this is the time of year when certain men decide what drink they will swallow during the summer, the following item will not be out of place: A wife asked her husband for a new dress. He replied: "Times are hard, my dear—so hard, I can hardly keep my nose above water." Whereupon she retorted: "You can keep your nose above the water easy enough, if you have a mind to; but the trouble is that you keep it too much above brandy."

☞ An old woman in Ohio "didn't want 'm to take any trouble after she was dead, but if it was just the same she'd like to be buried with her spectacles on."

☞ The weather is getting warm enough to permit female neighbors to lean over the fence, and talk about the people across the way.

☞ An intelligent Scotch preacher recently took for his text, "Adam, where art thou?" and divided his subject into three distinct parts: First—All men are somewhere. Second—Some men are where they ought not to be. Third—Unless they take care, they will soon find themselves where they would rather not be.

☞ Our valetudinarian being told by his medical adviser that he must wear thicker boots, replies that when a fellow has to walk through so much water, pumps would be more appropriate.

☞ A man in Sussex county, N. J., has brought suit against a clergyman for having married the plaintiff's daughter without his consent, she being under eighteen years of age.

☞ There will be a great rush to the University of Michigan. The very first female graduate of that institution has just married one of her classmates.

☞ A negro was put upon the stand as a witness, and the judge inquired if he understood the nature of an oath. "For certing, boss," said the citizen; "if I swears to a lie I must stick to him!"

☞ A robin red-breast sat upon a pole in Detroit one day last week, and a boy named Clyhammer brought out his father's revolver, leveled it at the bird, and pulled the trigger. The ball missed the robin by about ten feet, went through the window of a house and brought up in a pile of crockery. Some excitement was occasioned, and the boy was taken home and made to chase the boot-jack around his mother.

☞ Sending young alligators by mail in paper boxes is not popular with mail clerks in postal-cars at the South. The pets do not often reach their destination.

☞ GRATITUDE AND FORBEARANCE.—The heart that is at once softened by gratitude and the tear of joy will show its thankfulness in this, at least, that it will be milder toward others.

☞ A beautiful young girl was married in San Francisco last week, and at the conclusion of the marriage ceremony she turned to her husband, and said: "George, kiss me; I am dying." The husband complied with the request, and at that moment the young bride fell dead to the floor.

☞ A New York gentleman, who has lately been badly bled in Wall street, tells this old joke as upon himself:—"When I first came down in Wall street I was called Stockwell; then, when I began to make money, I was called Mr. Stockwell. Then it was Captain Stockwell; and subsequently I became known as Commodore Stockwell. Now it is that red-headed cuss from Cleveland."

☞ A young woman lately sent a bill of one dollar for light and fire to a young man who failed to come courting on the appointed evening.

☞ John Smith has been buried twenty-one times in Tippecanoe county, Ky., this winter, and yet some of him remains for the gleeful undertakers.

☞ "Who dat hit me? Whore's dat lantern?" were the exclamations of an astonished Elmira darkey after being thrown something like a hundred feet by a locomotive.

☞ A seafaring saint in Ohio, whose son had in some way occasioned him grief, used to say, "Ah! children, when they are little, tread on our knees; but when they are old, they tread on our hearts."

☞ A Chicago paper tells a story of real life thus:—"Because she did not have boiled cabbage for dinner, last Thursday, a Peoria husband wouldn't speak to his wife all the rest of the day, stayed out all night, and took his meals down-town next day; and for the next week he had boiled cabbage three times a day."

☞ Another brilliant youth has hung himself for fun. He dwelt in Vermont, and was playing on the stairs with a rope, when he attached one end of the line to the balusters and the other to his neck, and leaned forward to see how it would feel. He did not live to report on the sensation for the benefit of science, but it is generally believed that there was not much fun in it.

☞ Central City, Colorado, has a weekly paper called the Coach. Its figure head is a coach and four horses going at full tilt. At the head of the first column, first page, is the following line:—"R. W. Leach, Driver," which we understand means editor. Under the name of the driver, so called, is the following: "WARNING—The writing editor of the Coach carries his office in his hat, and will always be found at home. The fighting editor will be around every Saturday evening to settle all difficulties. The financial editor has gone to the Vienna Exposition. No bill will be paid until he returns."

☞ The Danbury News observes:—Walt Whitman is writing more of his poetry. The last is an ode to America. He intelligently observes:

"What if that gift of gifts thou lack'st?
The perfect feminine of thee? The beauty, health, completion fit for thee?
The mothers fit for thee?"

And here he stops. Not a word of how the battle resulted, but just drops down and leaves the reader to imagine the result. This is the secret of his success. His stops make him popular. The more he stops the more popular he becomes. If he should stop altogether the public would give him a monument, and perhaps a horse.

☞ SECRET SORROW.—Every heart has its secret sorrow, which the world knows not; and oftentimes we call a man cold when he is only sad.

☞ KEEPING HOUSE.—A mother has no right to bring up a daughter without teaching her how to keep house, and if she has an intelligent regard for her daughter's happiness will not do it.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

FERDINAND DE SOTO, THE DISCOVERER OF THE MISSISSIPPI. By JOHN S. C. ABBOTT. This biography of course includes accounts of the invasion of Peru, the expedition to Florida, and the other notable events in which De Soto was an actor. Published by Dodd & Mead, New York; and also for sale by Smith, English & Co., 710 Arch St., Philad.

TEXT-BOOK OF INTELLECTUAL PHILOSOPHY, FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES. By J. T. CHAMPLIN, D. D., President of Colby University. New edition; greatly improved. Published by Woolworth, Ainsworth & Co., New York and Chicago; and also for sale by J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philada.

PHILOSOPHY OF RHETORIC. By JOHN BASCOM, Professor in Williams College. Published by Woolworth, Ainsworth & Co.; and also for sale by J. B. Lippincott & Co., Phil.

ALL FOR LOVE; OR, THE OUTLAW'S BRIDE. By Miss ELIZA A. DUPUY, author of "The Mysterious Guest," &c. Published by T. B. Peterson, Phil.

A FAIR SAXON. A novel. By JUSTIN MCCARTHY, author of "Lady Judith," &c. Published by Sheldon & Co., New York; and also for sale by J. B. Lippincott & Co., Phil.

THE DEAD SIN, AND OTHER STORIES. By EDWARD GARRETT, author of "The Occupations of a Retired Life," &c. Published by Dodd & Mead, New York; and also for sale by Smith, English & Co., Phil.

The Heidelberg Duelling Corps.

The Constadt Observer says: "All visitors to Heidelberg must feel more or less interested in the famous duelling corps existing there. These corps date their origin almost as far back as the foundations of the Universities of the Elector Rupert I., in the year 1838. They were at first composed of all the best and noblest among the students; now, however, they no longer hold the rank they once did, but are looked on, even by some of their members, as necessary evils, on the keeping up of which the general honor of Heidelberg in some remote way depends. Many strange customs are prevalent among their members, not the least curious of which is the way the funeral rites of any of their number at the university are celebrated. The funeral takes place at night by the light of torches. The coffin, on which is placed the cap and swords of the deceased, is drawn on a low bier by four horses. Immediately after the body walk the members of the corps to which the deceased belonged, bearing torches, and followed by representatives from each of the other corps. On reaching the burial ground, which is situated at a short distance from the town, a 'chorale' is sung by the whole company, but no sooner is the coffin lowered into the grave, than the hymn is changed into one of the noisy drinking songs in which these students excel. Without any religious ceremony the grave is closed, and the cortege marches back to the town, where they again halt on the Universitäts-Platz, and form into a large circle. Two of the best swordsmen then go through the sword exercise, after which, with a loud shout, all the torches are thrown high in the air, so that they fall together in a burning pile in the centre of the circle. The ceremony thus brought to a close, the corps retire to their respective places of rendezvous, in one of the numerous taverns in the town, and the rest of the night is passed in carousing and merry-making."

A Short Romance.

Into the arid atmosphere of politics and bread-and-butter sometimes comes a bit of romance of melting sweetness. Of such is this story of two lovers and a remorseless father. Ten years ago a beautiful young Boston girl was sent to the Vermont hills to arrest, if possible, the indications of approaching consumption. She recovered her health, and meantime inflicted a careless wound upon the heart of an intelligent and well-educated young farmer's son. Unlike Lady Vere de Vere, she did not scorn his timid affection, but returned it heartily, referring him to her father. That traditionally unromantic personage wouldn't hear of it. "Never-r, never-r, shall a base mechanic wed me child!" The young man retired, went West and made a large fortune, and the young woman married the man presented by her father. She went to live in France; her husband died in two years, and her parents also dying, she remained abroad. The memory of her first romance faded with her as with its object, who, though unmarried, was too busy in making money for tender thoughts. Last year his business took him to Europe, and one night found him on a little steamer plying between Marseilles and Leghorn. A storm came up, and a lady, who had risen from her seat on deck to go below, was thrown overboard by a sudden lurch of the vessel. The "base mechanic" jumped after, and though in the dark the steamer drifted away from them, they clutched a providential plank and floated until they were picked up by another vessel. During the night, in the cold and the darkness, they discovered in each other the loved and lost of earlier years. The old feeling came back in that fearful hour, and on their arrival at Malta they were married. End of the poetry.

☞ An exquisite having become agriculturally ambitious, went into the country in search of a farm, and, finding one for sale, began to bargain for it. The seller mentioned, as one of the farm's recommendations, that it had a very cold spring on it. "Ah—aw!" said the fop; "I won't take it, then, for I've heard that a cold spring ruined the crops last year, and I don't want a place with such a drawback upon it."

☞ Deceit is invariably the refuge of the weak, commencing, perhaps, in mere excuses, and thence descending, by almost imperceptible gradations, to sin and crime.

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OBSERVATIONS.

BY MAX ADELER.

—We began to write an Indian poem on Wednesday, and got as far along as this:

O let me look into thy dark eyes,
Wanita,
That I may see if love inhabits there,
Wanita.
Then, as I kiss thy lips in sweet surprise,
Wanita,
O let me toy with thy dark raven hair,
Wanita.

As we wrote the last line, Johnson came in. He asked if he might make a suggestion. We said he might. Then Johnson urged that if Wanita's father happened to come home during the performance, it was likely the stern old warrior would toy with our dark raven hair with a butcher knife, with such efficiency that there would soon be a bald-headed poet in the wigwam. We shall not finish the poem. From the way in which it struck Johnson, we are afraid it will not be sufficiently impressive for general circulation.

—Perhaps you don't know Perkins. Perkins is an agriculturist. He is disgracefully ignorant of natural history, but he takes a deep interest in the subject of manures, and the moment you say anything about fertilizers, Perkins pricks up his ears and begins to enjoy himself. The other day he read in some one of the newspapers that Prof. Agassiz had taught a specimen of the iguana to come to him at the sound of music. It struck Perkins at the time as a rather singular sort of phenomenon, but he believed in the newspapers, and he determined to see what he could do in that direction. So Perkins took his accordeon and went down to the barn and sat in front of a bag of guano, and began to squeeze out "A Life on the Ocean Wave and a Home on the Rolling Deep." He did this three or four times, and still the guano did not move. Then he began again, and mashed out a lot of variations to the tune. But the guano bag manifested no disposition to come to him. Then he made another effort, and interjected exercises and fragments of the scales into "A Life on the Ocean Wave and a Home on the Rolling Deep" and spurted in a parcel of extra sharps and flats; and he played the air backwards and sideways and diagonally, and began in the middle and worked toward both ends, and infused several trills and modulations, and mixed it up with "Old Hundred," and "Beautiful Dreamer," and fugues and Gregorian chants, for four or five hours, and then he was taken to the house by his relations and put to bed. Perkins is now convinced that he was misinformed about Agassiz, and he wants to interview the editor that told the lie.

—A gentleman with whom we are acquainted, was employed some years ago to represent "The Wild Man of Afghanistan" in a New Jersey menagerie; and while standing in his cage, day after day, he gradually learned to love the fat woman, who sat upon the platform close to him. The keeper of the place also cherished a tender feeling for the young lady, and he became jealous of the Wild Man of Afghanistan. And when visitors would come, the keeper would procure a pole, with a nail in the end, and stick it through the bars of the cage, and stir the Wild Man of Afghanistan up, and jab him in the ribs. And he would ridicule the Wild Man's legs, and deliver a lecture upon the way he turned his toes in, and read chapters out of books of natural history, to show that a being with a skull of such a shape must of necessity be an idiot. Then he would poke the Wild Man of Afghanistan a few more times with the pole, and pass on to the next cage with some remarks tending to prove that the monkeys therein and the Wild Man were of the same general type. And all the time the fat woman would sit there and smile a cold and disdainful smile as if she believed it all, and hated such lega, and despised toes that turned in. At last the Wild Man of Afghanistan had his revenge, one day when all hands were off duty, the keeper fell asleep on the sofa. Then the untamed party from the distant east, threw a blanket over him, and went for the fat woman. He led her by the hand and asked her to be seated while he told her of his anguish. Then she suddenly sat down on the keeper. You could have passed the corpse under a closed door without scraping his vest buttons. They merely slid him in a crack in the ground when they buried him, and the fat woman pined eight hundred pounds of herself away and finally gave the remainder to the Wild Man of Afghanistan, who clasped as much of her as he could hold, to his bosom, and organized a fresh menagerie upon a new basis.

—Out in Australia a man named Smith has received a communication from the spirit world to the effect, that within a year the earth "will be burned as black as forgotten toast by a wave of fire." That allusion to toast will perhaps strike the reader as rather odd. You may not have noticed it, but it is a singular fact that as soon as a man named Smith begins to write upon the subject of toast he gets a little wild. Whether any special incongruity exists between toast and the name of Smith, or whether the great original Smith felt any remarkable repugnance for toast, and transmitted it to his posterity, we do not know. But it is remarkable that if you start up any particular Smith upon a general basis of toast, he will roll his eyes, and fumble among his hair, and behave like a condemned lunatic asylum. It acts on him very much as a life insurance agent does on a nervous man. He feels as if he would like to take you off to some quiet place, and prod you three or four times with a bayonet or a hay-fork. This subject of Smith and toast would be a very interesting one for investigation, and it is likely that if any Smith would consent to let himself be analyzed by some good chemist, valuable results to science might accrue. It would be very entertaining if it should turn out after all that some mediæval Smith had been caught by Fiji cannibals, and served up on toast. Then we should understand the origin of the family prejudice. But we should think the cannibals would be prejudiced too. There are very few Smiths we should care to eat, even with toast, and we are not very particular about diet.

—We have read with very deep interest a description of how Van Amburgh used to obtain control over tigers and other wild beasts. All he did was to mesmerize them two or three times, and they soon recognized his power and obeyed him. The thing seems simple and easy enough, now that we understand it, and we have no doubt at all that we could walk out into a jungle, and subdue the first tiger we met by making a few passes at him with our hands. But we are not anxious to do this, for one reason, because the India jungles are so far away, and for another because we do not want to hurt an innocent tiger. If we have to meddle with such animals, we always prefer to operate with those that are stuffed. Show us a tiger with sawdust bowels, and we will stand in front of him and make mesmeric motions for a week, without the quiver of a nerve. Not that we are timid when the tiger is alive, but simply because a fur store is more convenient than a jungle, and there is less danger of wetting our feet. If we happened to be in India, and we wanted a tiger, we should unhesitatingly go out and stand boldly in front of the very first one we saw—tied to a tree—and we should bring him home instantly, if we could find a man willing to lead him with a string. But this kind of courage is born in some men. It cannot be acquired; and timid persons who intend to practice Van Amburgh's method, will perhaps find it more judicious to begin the mesmerizing operation by soothing the animal with a shot-gun or a howitzer.

—The Wandering Jew is reputed to have appeared a few weeks ago at Odessa dressed in tattered garments and with long, white hair and beard. We want to believe that there is such a party as the Wandering Jew, but it is hard to have much faith in him when he will persist in showing himself only in out-of-the-way places. What we want is, to see him get out of a railroad train in this city, enter a street car, pay his fare like a man and call at this office to be interviewed. If we ever get hold of him we shall get him a new suit of clothes, with a clean shirt and a breastpin, and a high hat and a box of paper collars. Then we shall take him around and have his hair cut, buy him an umbrella and a pair of skates, and rent him a melodeon with which to soothe himself when he feels lonely at nights. Then we should advise him to take out an accident insurance policy, to wear gum shoes when it is wet, not to play billiards on Sunday, and never to eat cheese when he is dyspeptic. If he was open to an engagement we might employ him as travelling correspondent for this paper, and give him a railroad pass and twelve dollars a week. This would be practical. At present, if he really is living, he is an intolerable, dilapidated, and useless old humbug. If this meets his eye we hope he will understand that we want to see him right off.

—We have never associated much with royalty, partly because most monarchs of the present day are not proper companions for a virtuous young man, and partly because none of them have come to this country animated by a craving anxiety for our society. But we have seen a great deal of kings in the theatres, and we have never been more thankful that we are a republican who can never by any possibility be placed upon a throne, than when we have observed that every movement of a king is always heralded by a flourish of trumpets and a roll of drums. This would constitute an insuperable objection to our assumption of a crown. It would be very disagreeable if there was a man hired by the government to execute the chromatic scale upon a brass horn every time we went from the bath-room to the front parlor, or to plunge about wildly through variations on the trombone whenever we crossed our legs or took a drink of water. It would be equally horrible if, when we went to the head of the stairs to call to the hired girl to put breakfast on, an uproarious fiend in the yard should rattle out the long roll on a drum, or if a boisterous person should stand in the entry whenever we dived in the closet for an umbrella, to go down the street, and should snort out a wild fanfaronade upon a cavalry bugle! If that umbrella were loaded we should certainly feel obliged to blow out the brains of the orchestra, and if we did not mellow the drummer's bones with our sceptre, not even the dignity of our office would prevent us from pitching the royal spittoon out of the window at him. So upon the whole it is perhaps better that things are as they are. If Spain desires another king, we wish it to be understood that we are not a candidate for the office. Rather than submit to the eternal and scandalous racket which pursues a sovereign, rather than wear pink-plush night-gowns and yellow stockings without pants, we would drive a horse-car, and wear a perpetual two-dollar duster.

—A writer in a scientific journal informs us, with positive emphasis, that whales are often afflicted with rheumatism. How he became aware of the fact we do not know. Science finds out these things by mysterious methods, which cannot be disclosed to such worms as us common people. Our readers will be surprised to learn, however, that we have ascertained that catfish suffer frequently from depression of spirits; that clams are often skeptical about the immortality of the soul; and that mud eels are gloomiest in their views of life when they are bilious and drunk. This is as far as we have gone. If further investigations still develope the tendency of the blue-nosed baboon to chronic paralysis of the tail, or of the giraffe to melancholy because of the unreasonable scarcity of paper collars that will fit him, the world shall know it. We never make a secret of such discoveries of the wonders of nature.

DIFFERENT VIEWS OF THE SAME THING.

EDWIN (to his Angelina.) "With you by my side, my very own, with *you*, I could wander among these *heavenly* hills and dales for *ever!*"

ANGELINA (to her Edwin.) "And so could *I* with *you*, my *veriest* own! ! for *ever* and *ever*, and EVER! ! !"

ANGELINA'S SISTER (to herself.) "*Oh*, dear me! what a trotting up and down it all *is*, to be sure!"

PAYING A DEBT.

BY ELLA WHEELER.

That Helen Amsbury was in the habit of flirting sometimes, could not be denied. That she was a heartless, vain coquette, as many people said, was not true. But when men or women commit an error in any one line a few times, and once get the *name* of being faulty or sinful in that respect, they never get any credit for the times they resist or overcome temptation—but we are always informed when they fall to do so. It is the way of the world, and I have not set out to berate the world for it now. I will save that for a separate article, after I finish my story.

She went down to Hillsdale to spend the winter holidays with her aunt and cousins. It was a delightful country place, just near enough town to be convenient, and her Aunt Weston had always a houseful of gay young people in the festive seasons. There were two or three agreeable families in the vicinity also, who entertained holiday company, besides being desirable acquisitions themselves, so Hillsdale became a very pleasant resort at various times during the year

Helen's Aunt Jane and her Cousins Josie and Ned gave her rapturous greeting, and introduced her to a good looking young man, Mr. Simson, a college friend of Ned's, who looked as if he would like to join in the kissing and hugging the others bestowed upon Helen, but resisted the inclination manfully, only giving her an admiring glance.

She was fair to look upon, but no more so than scores of girls you know. Yet something in Helen Amsbury's marvellous eyes drew men to her, and made her queen wherever she went. A nameless fascination, an intangible *something* won her hearts and friends. She won hearts unconsciously, without exerting herself to do so. It was rarely she flirted with the intention to make conquests. She had never done so, save in two instances, when she deemed a lesson necessary to work a reformation in two conceited specimens of manhood. Yet people called her a malicious flirt, and only those who knew her intimately denied it.

"Ned, who's here?" was Helen's first query, after the greetings, and hurry and flurry of arrival had subsided.

"Well, there's the Bowens and Lesters, who are always here stationary," Ned replied, "and there are four couples at each place from abroad. Kitty Evans and Rose Smith, and Willis Montgomery, and—oh, I guess you know them all except one or two. There is a Miss Reid—Nettie Reid—at Lester's, who is a new acquisition, and a right nice girl too; and there's Rob Hunter at Bowen's, a splendid fellow, who is also new among us. All the others, or nearly all, you know."

Helen met Miss Reid the following day. She was a very pretty girl, with a sweet, childish face and pale yellow hair, and a mouth like a grieved child.

"I like her," she said to her Cousin Josie, after Miss Reid took her departure. "There is something very winsome and appealing about her face that attracts me."

The two became fast friends. Helen was a girl that formed strong attachments for those of her own sex upon impulse, and was true as steel to those she loved. Nettie Reid was clinging, tender and confiding, and seemed to look up with a childish sort of love to Helen's stronger nature.

Helen was a favorite with all, male and female, and she possessed that happy faculty of leaving each one of her friends with the impression that he or she was the most cherished of all. Not that she was in any way hypocritical, only so gracious to all, because she *felt* so, and did not try to conceal her feelings, and each one attributed her graciousness as designed especially for him or her.

Her Cousin Ned adored the very earth she trod on. Willis Montgomery was her shadow, and poor Albert Simons was lost in the delirium of his first love, and knew not earth from heaven when Helen was near. But among them all Helen walked serenely, casting smiles and beaming glances upon all save *one*. That one was Robert Hunter.

"Why is it, Nell, that you snub Rob Hunter so?" queried her Cousin Josie. "You are awfully haughty and cold to him, while like a sunbeam to all the others. And he is the very finest man we have among us. If I possessed your faculty for drawing the men, I should certainly spread my net for him first of all. He is perfectly splendid."

"He is very pleasant, no doubt," Helen answered, quietly.

"But what do you freeze him so for? He dares not approach you, and you will never get acquainted at this rate."

"And if we don't, the sun will continue to rise and set all the same, I presume," Helen answered coolly as she walked out of the room.

Helen Amsbury kept her own counsel. She did not care to air her peculiar ideas of principle and honor for her friends or relatives to comment upon. But she knew very well why she snubbed Robert Hunter. One day, early in their acquaintance, Nettie Reid had in a few simple, thoughtless expressions, laid bare the secret of her heart to Helen Amsbury; and from that hour Helen had been coolly indifferent to Robert Hunter, because she knew Nettie Reid loved him. And lest an ungenerous public should accuse her of attempting to flirt if she acted her own cordial, winsome self, she assumed the haughty role, and kept him at a safe distance, certain that she should not wound Nettie's feelings or arouse her jealousy if this course were adopted. For she knew that Nettie was morbidly jealous of all attentions Robert Hunter paid to others, although he was not bound to her in any way. He was somewhat lover like in his manner at times, showing a preference for Nettie's society, yet in no way was he devoted. That he admired Nettie, Helen felt as sure as she did that Nettie loved him; and whatever she could do to promote the happiness of her friend and advance her cause she did gladly. Yet of this as of greater things the world remained ignorant, only seeing that she flirted with half a dozen men, and blaming her for it.

One day they all set out on foot to the skating pond, half a mile away. The young people paired off, as best suited them, as best suited some *one* of each couple at least; only as ill luck would have it, Ned, Nettie, Mr. Hunter and Helen, were the last to leave the house, and her shoe came unlaced just as she closed the door, and she had to go back and lace it; so Ned, never thinking, gave his arm to Nettie and started on, leaving Rob Hunter to walk with Helen when she was ready. Helen was annoyed beyond measure. She felt sure the whole day would be spoiled for Nettie, and that would spoil it for her. Before they had proceeded many rods a bright thought struck her.

"Oh! I have forgotten my fur collar," she cried, (she had purposely left it at home,) "and now I shall catch cold, and have one of my dreadful sore throats. Ned, Ned, I say, come back here; I have forgotten something."

"I will return for it, Miss Amsbury," interposed Mr. Hunter.

"No, thank you, I think you could not find it. Ned will know just where it is, and he can get it more quickly."

Ned turned back in hot haste at Helen's call.

"Go back to the house and get my fur cape," Helen commanded; "and you, Mr. Hunter, go on with Miss Reid, while I wait here for Ned."

Mr. Hunter went on, and Helen's mind was at rest. Yet there were spiteful people who even accused Helen of being anxious to show her power over her Cousin Ned by that act, instead of giving her credit for an unselfish, kind hearted deed. But, as I remarked some time since, it is the way of the world to see the evil and ignore the good which people do.

It was just two evenings later that Helen Amsbury overheard a remark that hurt her like a stab in the dark, and caused a complete change in her course of action. They were all over at the Bowen mansion to a little fête. Helen was in excellent spirits, and more brilliant and charming than usual. She had been waltzing with Willis Montgomery, but had grown tired, and slipped into a side room, where, near the door, she sat and watched the dancers. She had not been there more than a few seconds, when Nettie Reid paused almost so near she could touch her, leaning on the arm of Carlos Lester, one of Helen's admirers.

"What a delightful evening it has been!" Nettie said. "Every one seems in such excellent spirits. I know I never felt better in my life, and several I think are in their element to-night. Miss Amsbury is gayer than ever."

"She seems to be enjoying the evening much," Carlos answered. "But she is a general favorite, and seems happy everywhere."

"Yes, and it is too bad, she is such an unprincipled coquette. Were it not for that, she would be almost perfect I think."

It was Nettie's voice that said this, and Carlos who replied.

"Indeed! I would never have thought her that. She is gay and full of life, and loves admiration, but I should not think her heartless or unprincipled."

The couple passed on, out of hearing, leaving Helen like one who had been stabbed to the heart by a friend. It was so unexpected—so unlooked-for. An hour later, as she stood in the dressing-room, arranging her hair, Nettie stole in and encircled her waist with an arm.

"How beautiful you are to-night, dear," Nettie said, lovingly. "I am so proud of you. How hateful it is in that stupid Mr. Lester to call you a flirt and a heartless coquette, just because you are admired and loved by all. But never mind—if some do say spiteful things, I know you as you are."

Helen turned away quickly, almost unable to control herself, but answered laughingly,

"Of course you know me, dear, and are always ready to defend me against my enemies. With *such* a friend I have little to fear from envious or spiteful people."

Their eyes met for one second, and though Helen was smiling, Nettie knew that her words contained a lurking sarcasm, and went down wondering what had changed her friend's confidence into suspicion. And Helen,—she sat for a few moments buried in deep thought. "Oh, the traitor!" she muttered. "After all I have done to befriend her, to treat me so. I should think less of it, if she had made the remark to Robert Hunter. I would then excuse it on the plea of her love for him, and the fear that he *might* be tempted to admire me. But she tried to prejudice me against a man she cares nothing for, and tried to make him scorn me, just out of pure envy, because she is spiteful at the attentions I receive. Oh! she shall suffer for this. It is cruel to be deceived so by a friend; to find she is a traitor, a *mean* one too."

Half an hour later Robert Hunter, standing alone by the window in the ball-room, was electrified by hearing the sweetest of voices saying:

"You most ungallant of men! Do you know you have not asked me to dance to-night? and how can you hear that bewildering waltz without wanting to join the waltzers, with me for a partner."

And Robert Hunter looked into Helen Amsbury's winsome, piquant face with the most astonished brown eyes she ever saw in her life.

"Indeed, Miss Amsbury," he exclaimed, endeavoring to hide his surprise, "I should be most happy to do so—but you have been so surrounded by admirers all the evening, I have had no opportunity of approaching you. Will you favor me now?"

So off they whirled, and a very handsome couple they were, too—and Nettie Reid, sitting near, saw them circle by. Helen's fair head almost resting upon Robert Hunter's broad shoulder, and she ground her teeth in the anguish of jealousy.

When Helen Amsbury chose to keep a gentleman at her side, she usually did so, and so skilfully that the gentleman supposed he was staying of his own free will, and not because she compelled him to. Robert Hunter stayed at Miss Amsbury's side the remainder of that evening, and Helen's Cousin Josie opened her eyes wide at the new turn affairs had taken.

"These delicious days!" Helen said, just before the party broke up for the night. "How they are slipping away; we certainly ought to make the most of them, and never lose an hour, for we may never all be here again. I wonder what is planned for to-morrow afternoon? We shall all be sufficiently recuperated by that time, to do something."

"Well, then, suppose you and I begin to plan, by agreeing to take a sleigh ride together. The sleighing is glorious, and I have my horse and cutter here, as you know. What say you?"

"Yes, with pleasure!" responded Helen, "Our plan is good—and we will let the rest plan for themselves."

And she adroitly changed the conversation, so he did not think to inform the remainder of the company of what was afoot. She chose to have it otherwise.

There was general surprise, when Robert Hunter drove up to the door the following afternoon, and Miss Helen was called for, and came down equipped for a ride. No one had suspected such a thing, and Josie was more in the maze of wonder than ever.

They drove for half an hour, when suddenly Helen said—

"Oh, Mr. Hunter, when we return, will you please drive by Mr. Lester's? Nettie Reid promised me a book, a few days ago, and unless I get it now, I shall not have time to read it before I go back to town, as she was very anxious I should."

Mr. Hunter complied with her request, and himself rang the bell, and asked to see Miss Reid, and when that lady made her appearance, told her his errand; while Helen called out from the sleigh—

"Nettie, dear, you ought to be out this beautiful day! You have no idea how fine the sleighing is. I have had such a delightful ride."

Miss Reid brought the book and handed it to Mr. Hunter without a word, and shut the door almost in his face. She had not the tact to conceal her mortification and jealousy, even.

"The first instalment of my debt is paid," was Helen's mental comment. "But I owe her more yet. This will not make good the injury she did my feelings, the shock she gave my confidence."

Helen was wonderfully brilliant all that afternoon, and Mr. Hunter, always susceptible to a lovely woman's charms, was completely bewildered. She had been so cold, so distant, so haughty! this sudden change dazzled him, and he was in a quandary. He thought Miss Amsbury an interesting "study." And when a man begins to "study a woman" he begins to fall in love with her, as a usual thing. It was certainly so in this case. He was obliged to be much in Helen's society in order "to study her interesting peculiarities" he said, but outsiders called it another name. And before he knew it he was very much in love. Nettie Reid, hearing of all and seeing much, grew almost frantic with rage. The morning of Helen's departure, Robert Hunter proposed, Helen declined very gently, and that day Nettie Reid received a farewell call from Mr. Hunter, and a note from Miss Amsbury that read—

"MY DEAR NETTIE.—When next you wish to say ugly things of your friends, choose a place where your friends will not overhear you. I regretted that you compelled me to give you so much pain, but I think our little debt is settled now, and wish you every success imaginable.

"Yours, HELEN."

But Robert Hunter did not forward Helen's wishes or Nettie's "success" by returning to his first fancy. He went away and left Nettie with a friendly good-bye—nothing more. He could not rid himself so soon of Helen's image. He tried for two years to do so, but failed; and at the expiration of that time, he sought her again, renewed his suit, and was accepted; for Helen had discovered that in paying off the debt she owed Miss Reid, she had given herself something to remember so long as she should live. And when she tried to forget Robert Hunter, she could not. So she did not say to him nay again, but married him. Two years afterward, Miss Reid married Carlos Lester; but the two women have never renewed the old time intimacy.

Answers to Correspondents.

PAY YOUR POSTAGE.—Authors and others often send us letters and manuscripts not fully paid. In these cases the Department here enforces payment of the deficiency—which we either have to pay, or to decline receiving the letters or manuscripts. Authors will also bear in mind that the Department now requires letter postage on all manuscripts—therefore it is often cheaper, as it is always safer, to send large packages by express.

COUNTRY asks: "1st. If there were several young ladies going home with my sister from church, would it be necessary for me to ask one of them if I could accompany her? What should I say? 2d. How is "fine-cut" tobacco prepared? Is it more unhealthy to chew than "home-spun." 3d. Is there proof positive that Lincoln's assassin was killed? I know there were several put to death for the deed, but did they get the right one? 4th. My business requires me to write very fast. How can I improve my writing under the circumstances?" 1st. Of course—why not? Is it so difficult to ask a simple, polite question? Young ladies justly feel a slight contempt for a gentleman who is so extremely diffident. They like a man to be a man, and not a mouse. 2d. We do not chew tobacco, and therefore know very little about the difference between "fine-cut" and "home-spun." We should advise you to chew just as little of either as possible, if you have proper care for your health. 3d. There is no reasonable doubt of the death of Booth. 4th. Be as careful as you can.

FRANK asks: "1st. How much will it cost to learn telegraphy, and, where would be the proper place to learn? Could not one operator teach it as well as another? 2d. What is the reason Indians never have any beard or whiskers; don't they grow at all?" 1st. It depends upon your ability in a great degree. Any operator could teach you. What he would charge would depend upon various circumstances. Of course some operators would be better teachers than others. 2d. Indians pull their beards out by the roots, we believe. We are inclined to think, however, that they would not have very heavy beards, even if they allowed them to grow. The white races have the heaviest beards.

ANNIE says: "1st. I have heard it stated that out about half way in the Atlantic Ocean, there are springs of fresh water that bubble up from the bottom and do not mix with the salt water, but remain pure and fresh. Is there anything of the kind? and if so, can vessels get it to use? 2d. Can a Roman Catholic be President of the United States? 3d. How do you pronounce Trochees?" 1st. We do not know as to the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, but there is a fresh-water spring—a very large one—in the ocean, some distance off the coast of Florida, where vessels can take in fresh water to any extent. And we have heard of a vessel off the coast of South America, and out of sight of land, which hailed another vessel for water, as they were perishing for it, and the answer came back, "well, fling a bucket overboard, and get it." They were in the outflow of that great river, the Amazon. 2d. Of course—if he gets the necessary number of electoral votes. 3d. Tro-kee, accent on the first syllable.

W. W., (Wellsborough, Pa.), asks: "1st. Have three men who went to the Tip-top House, on Mount Washington, reported themselves yet? I have not seen any account of them this spring, and I have quite a curiosity to hear. 2d. What is the use of the centre shaft from the top down when a tunnel is dug through a mountain for a railroad? 3d. How is my writing for a farmer's boy?" 1st. We have seen no report of the kind. 2d. To ventilate the tunnel, we suppose. 3d. Plain and good, but not very elegant.

J. T. K. (Pleasant Ridge, Ark.,) asks: "Is the State of Oregon a healthy, fertile and mild climated country? Is it much settled up; would I be justified in going to that country, and next do you reckon anybody wants me there? I write a very bad hand don't I? What would it cost me to go to Oregon from here?" Oregon, we believe, is quite a fertile and healthy country, with a mild climate, so that cattle are wintered in the fields. Active, serviceable men such as farmers and mechanics, are always in demand in new countries. We do not know what it would cost you to go, but it would depend a little how you went. We suppose $100 would take you, if you were not particular about your accommodations. Your handwriting is not remarkable any way.

KATIE LEE, (Culpepper County, Va.,) asks: "1st. Why are orange blossoms always worn by a bride? 2d. How do the precious stones rank in regard to value? 3d. Are these, 'An honest man is the noblest work of God,' and 'Spare the rod, and spoil the child,' quotations from the Bible. Last but not least—what do you think of my writing?" 1st. They are not *always* worn. They are considered appropriate from their fragrance and beauty. A chaplet of white roses is also appropriate as being symbolic of purity and youthful innocence. 2d. The diamond is generally considered the most precious; though we have seen it stated that a very large ruby is even more valuable. 3d. The second quotation is, we believe, from the Bible. The first is from Pope. 4th. Good. To the children's question, which comes with the above, we answer, from natural causes.

S. K.—Your manuscript was respectfully declined, and was directed, with a note, to the address given by you. As, at the end of ten days, it was returned to us by the Post-office Department, we presume the direction was not sufficient.

ROBERT HOE.—E. A. S.—Your manuscripts are very respectfully declined.

B. B., (Marion Township, Ind.,) says: "I wish to inquire through your columns if there is such a thing as machinery to straighten hair, for the purpose of weaving into braids, curls, &c.? If so, where could I get one, and what is the price? I also wish to inquire if you know of such a man as ——, who sells Fit Powders? Is he a reliable man? Does he give success, or is he a quack?" 1st. There may be such machinery; but if so, we know nothing about it. 2d. If you have fits, go to a doctor.

ARTILLERY, (Plattsburgh, N. Y.,) says: "Being a reader of your paper, I have taken the liberty of asking you two questions, having great faith in your answers. 1st. Has a cannon ever thrown a shot or shell three miles? 2d. What is the furthest a cannon ever did throw a shot or shell, well authenticated." The Armstrong gun has thrown shot and shell more than five miles.

MATTIE L. asks: "Will you please be so kind as to give me a little advice through the columns of THE POST? I am a young lady, nineteen years old, and have been going with a young man now over a year. He does not live in this place, but lives about one hundred miles from here. We have always corresponded, and been the best of friends since our acquaintance, and I began to prize him above all others. He came to see me a short time ago, and was as friendly as ever. He told me he would visit me the next week, but he did not come, and the next week he went back without seeing me again. He has been gone now two weeks, and I have not received any word from him. Please tell me what to do; whether to write to him to know the cause of such action or not. If he should write again to me, what shall I do about answering? and also what do you think of such action?" You have probably offended him in some way, or some one else may have prejudiced him against you. Your best course will be to write to him and desire an explanation. But we would not advise you to write severely, as his action may have been caused by circumstances having no relation to you. If he writes the character of his letter will guide you as to answering.

DIX, (Rondeau, Ontario,) says: "The Post is indeed an agreeable companion, and I often wonder how you can afford such an interesting paper at so low a figure. Will you please answer the following questions? 1st. Is a President of the United States eligible for office more than twice? 2d. Do you want any stories or other matter from new contributors? 3d. What kind of a ring would be most suitable for an engagement ring? 4th. Should a gentleman get into a buggy before a lady?" 1st. Yes. 2d. Good stories are always acceptable. 3d. A solitaire stone ring is most fashionable just at present. 4th. No.

N. S (Dayton, O.,) says: "I will ask if you can tell how eels are propagated. I have lived almost eighty years, and asked a great many people, but none knew anything about it. If you have any knowledge of it please tell me." Their habits in spawning differ from those of most "fish of passage." The latter generally ascend rivers to their headwaters, to deposit their spawn, Eels, on the contrary, descend the rivers, to their estuaries, or to the sea, for this purpose. In the spring the young eels ascend the rivers in countless numbers. Species confined to interior waters deposit their spawn in lakes or rivers.

FRANCISCO asks: "Will you please tell me whether you will publish a story by Mrs. Henry Wood, at any time this year? Also your opinion of my handwriting?" We cannot tell yet. She is now publishing a fine story in the Lady's Friend. Your writing is very fair.

NICK, (Urbana, Ohio,) asks: "1st. What book, if any, is there devoted exclusively to the early settlements of America, and their respective influences, that is since its discovery by Columbus? 2d. When a person is serenaded what is the proper ceremony to offer the musicians? 3d. What of the oft-repeated question—my handwriting?" 1st. There are many books which touch upon the subject mentioned, but we are not aware of any devoted exclusively to that subject. 2d. There is great difference of opinion on the question of treating serenaders. Some think the proper thing is to invite them in and treat them to hot punch. Others prefer to treat them to hot water, administered from second story windows. There is one class of serenaders, the feline, for which old boots are considered the proper treatment. If pleased with your serenaders you might invite them in to a collation. That would be strictly according to rule. 3d. Moderately good.

[Several letters are held over to be answered in our next.]

RIDDLER.

Charades, Riddles, Problems, etc., must always be accompanied by their answers, or they will not be published.

All who take an interest in this column are respectfully invited to contribute.

MISCELLANEOUS ENIGMA.

I am composed of 77 letters.

My 20, 42, 77, 17, 1, 18, 28, was an Italian artist of great repute.

My 32, 45, 7, 47, 19, 60, 41, 6, is the muse that presides over eloquence.

My 32, 46, 75, 8, 77, 30, 15, 59, 52, was an Egyptian queen.

My 54, 16, 59, 71, 23, 54, 54, is a celebrated musical composer.

My 37, 22, 54, 40, 69, 12, 64, 76, is a beautiful valley in California.

My 26, 2, 68, 24, 56, is the goddess of flowers.

My 20, 14, 19, 62, 50, is a river in France.

My 9, 36, 74, 5, 52, 21, 77, 54, 35, 12, 59, 39, is one of the United States.

My 4, 53, 32, 49, 22, 70, 20, 71, 65, 66, was an astronomer of ancient times.

My 10, 56, 3, 3, 30, 43, 63, is a French writer.

My 11, 50, 41, 31, 27, 25, 75, is the god of the ocean.

My 67, 30, 72, 55, 46, 7, 61, 54, was a Lydian king.

My 44, 59, 8, 21, 6, 51, 71, 24, 37, is an animal.

My 34, 40, 48, 39, 30, 73, means four.

My 13, 8, 2, 58, 16, 33, 59, 40, 1, 51, is a plant.

My 38, 57, 8, 29, 7, 50, 54, was an Irish poet.

My 57, 1, 32, 59, 18, is a substance that is found in the lining of shells.

My whole is an extract from Ovid.

ADA.

Holland Patent, N. Y.

HIDDEN FLOWERS.

1. Your book will never have the popularity the Arabian Nights had, Emma.
2. Will you ever be natural.
3. Thy memory is dear to me.
4. Josie, run home immediately.
5. You have no cape on your cloak.
6. I know all that you can tell me.
7. John's age and mine are the same.
8. Socrates was deep in knowledge.
9. Love of country is a noted trait of the Irish race.
10. "To your own self be true."

GAHMEW.

Fort Totten, D. T.

WORD SQUARE.

To contend with.
A man's name.
To hang or depend.
A pet nickname.

E. E. WOODS.

CONUNDRUMS.

Why is a gouty old gentleman like a window? Because he is full of pains (panes.)

What is that which increases the more you take from it? Why, a hole, of course.

Why is an egg overdone like one underdone? Because it is hardly done.

Why is a chicken pie like a gunsmith's shop? Because it contains fowl-in-pieces.

Why is the letter R a profitable letter? Because it turns ice into rice.

How many peas are there in pint? One P.

How would you see through a young lady? By prefixing G to lass, and it would turn her to glass.

ANSWERS TO LAST.

ENIGMA.—
"He that fights and runs away,
May live to fight another day."

DIAMOND PUZZLE.—

I N D I A N A
M A S O N R Y
M I R A N D A
L O U I S X I (XL.)
P O T O M A C
E X P E N S E
F A R A D A Y

WORD SQUARE—

B E R T H
E M E R Y
R E-D A M
T R A C E
H Y M E N

☞ METHODS OF INFLUENCE.—There is no doubt that, among our social obligations, that of influencing others to right conduct should rank very high. We have not fulfilled our whole duty to our fellow men when we have accorded them liberty of action, have secured their natural rights, and removed all impediments to their onward progress; we also owe them a direct and positive influence for good.

☞ THE BEAUTIFUL.—Never lose an opportunity of seeing anything beautiful. Beauty is God's handwriting—a wayside sacrament; welcome it in every fair face, every fair sky, every fair flower, and thank Him for it, the fountain of loveliness; and drink it in, simply and earnestly, with your eyes: it is a charmed draught, a cup of blessing.

☞ The youth of the soul is everlasting, and eternity is youth.—*Richter.*